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Senate

The Senate met at 9:50 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Spirit of God, from generation to generation, people of faith speak of Your greatness. Thank You for the strength You give to all who love You and for the blessings You bestow upon our Nation.

Today, give our lawmakers the contentment that comes from knowing and serving You. Clear their hearts with Your peace as You bring them into a closer relationship with You.

Shield this land we love against all enemies foreign and domestic as You teach us to dwell in Your peace. Lord, make us to know a constancy of Your presence, to be aware of the certainty of Your judgment, and to give primacy to prayer in these challenging times.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Democratic leader is recognized.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in less than 18 months, Americans all over the country will cast their ballots in the 2016 elections. This exercise fulfills one of the most basic promises of our constitutional democracy: that all citizens have the right to vote, regardless of race, gender, or social status.

This right to vote and the guarantee that each vote counts equally is the foundation of our form of government. It ensures that as this country changes, the elected officials who represent its citizens will also reflect those changes. The electorate should be able to elect those who represent them, their thoughts, and their ideals. Yet, there is an ongoing effort all over America to obstruct the work of perfecting our Union by hindering progress where it is needed the most.

We see this reflected in the debate about whether the Confederate flag—a symbol of bigotry and racism—still has a place on public lands. There should be no debate. The answer to this question is no. And that matter should have been settled long ago. It was not. It took the deaths of nine innocent people, perhaps, to move this issue forward.

We see this reflected in the debate about whether gay people have the right to marry. After all that has gone on, there should be no debate in this regard. The answer to this question is yes. The matter should have been settled long ago.

We see this reflected in the insidious fight to keep certain citizens from exercising their constitutional right to vote by instituting voter ID laws. There should be no debate. The answer to this question is no poll tax or any sort of maneuver designed to prevent voting should exist anyplace at any time. That matter was settled long ago—or at least we thought it was.

The fight is not new. It is deeply rooted in our Nation's history. I finished many years ago now a book, ''Freedom Summer,'' about these courageous, brilliant young men and women who went to Mississippi and spent one summer. It pointed out how the people of Mississippi at that time would do anything they could to keep an African American from voting. That is wrong. The Constitution now grants women and citizens of all races the right to vote. There have long been efforts to undermine that right. We also see it playing out in State capitols across the country. Districts are being gerrymandered to ensure that minority votes have the least possible impact on election outcomes. We have seen it playing out in courtrooms, where the Voting Rights Act has been under attack.

Congress passed the Voting Rights Act 50 years ago—hard to believe but 50 years ago. Historically, it is one of the country's most important laws—or was an important law. It aimed to clear the path to the ballot box for all citizens who choose to vote. But 2 years ago, the Supreme Court, in one of their questionable decisions, struck down a crucial section of the Voting Rights Act, in a 5-to-4 decision in the case of Shelby County v. Holder. As a result of the Court's decision, it is now easier for States to enact laws making it harder for citizens to vote, and they have taken that way past where they should have. Voter ID, shortening the time for early voting—they are doing so many different things to prevent people from voting. It is hard to believe there would be efforts made to stop people from voting.

In the States where we have same-day registration, I am not aware of a single case—not a single case of any type of fraud. The voter turnout where we have same-day registration is tremendous.

In the Presiding Officer's State and my State, there have been efforts made over the years to make sure that 30 days before an election, either a primary or general, no more registrations. How ridiculous. I personally have tried to get that changed for decades, but no luck. The county clerks from 15 rural counties have enough juice in the State legislature to prevent that from happening. It is too bad. Why in the world

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

should we stop registration a month before an election? Election day is when people are so excited about voting. So I am really very disappointed in what is happening in my own State regarding keeping people from voting.

The Voting Rights Act was very important, but now it is harder and harder for people to vote. There is little question that Republican-controlled State legislatures have taken advantage of this decision. I repeat: In States all across this country, Republican-controlled State legislatures have passed burdensome voter ID laws that target minority voters especially, college students especially, and many other groups, to prevent them from voting.

In Ohio—a State that experienced the longest voting lines in the Nation, even longer than the questionable Florida election—the Republican legislature scaled back early-voting hours in an effort to keep people from voting. The legislature in North Carolina eliminated same-day registration when it worked so well and the turnout—it helped significantly. How can we work to form a more perfect union when some States actively work to prevent our fellow citizens from voting?

We have a moral obligation to protect the right to vote for every American citizen. Our country is stronger when every eligible voter participates. The Dean of the Senate, Senator LEAHY, has introduced robust legislation to repair the damage from the Supreme Court's Shelby County decision. I am happy to support the efforts made by the senior Senator from Vermont. His bill will restore the heart of the Voting Rights Act. It will create a new nationwide coverage formula that applies to any State with repeated voting rights violations in the last 25 years. It will also establish a targeted process for reviewing voting changes and also any changes these jurisdictions make all around the country that have a record of discrimination against voters. This bill requires reasonable public notice for voting changes and also allows the Attorney General to request Federal observers to be present in places where a serious threat of racial discrimination may occur.

We must do everything we can to restore and reestablish and defend the Voting Rights Act. Congress must act to protect one of the most important legislative accomplishments of the civil rights era. We should ensure that every American has equal access to the ballot. It is the right thing to do. As Dr. King said many years ago, ''There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.'' To push forward, under the words of Dr. King, is so important.

Let's do everything we can to have people vote. Let's stand together on increasing, not diminishing, one's ability to vote. Why? Because it is the right thing to do.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the road to yesterday's win for the middle class on TPA was never going to be an easy one. It was hardly a quick one.

We always knew that was going to be the case, but I thought we owed it to the working men and women of our country to push ahead anyway. So we did. Through every bump and twist along the way, Republicans and Democrats held together.

In achieving something that can open more opportunities for working families, we proved the growing power of good ideas in the new Republican Congress. In passing legislation that can facilitate the lowering of barriers and the lifting up of our workers in the 21st century, we proved that this is a new Congress that is back to work on behalf of the American people.

Passing trade wasn't the first bipartisan achievement of this new Congress, and it won't be the last, but it is significant. It opens the door for more wins for the middle class as trade negotiators move forward under this President and, importantly, under the next President as well.

I thank everyone who worked with us to get here on both sides of the aisle. It is thanks to continued cooperation and no end of determination that we were able to achieve another important accomplishment for our country.

WARRIOR GAMES 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on an entirely different matter, yesterday I had the pleasure of meeting with some of our Nation's heroes. These men and women are taking part in Warrior Games 2015, an annual DOD-organized sporting event for both veterans and wounded, ill, and injured servicemembers from every corner of the country. This year's games featured approximately 250 athletes from the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, and Marine Corps. All of these wounded warriors gave it their all in heated competition. Their bravery and their perseverance through adversity serve as a source of inspiration to the rest of us. Their determination serves as a continuing reminder that heroism endures long after events on the battlefield.

It was a great honor to meet some of these courageous athletes and their families yesterday afternoon. They were here in the Capitol. I shared the thanks of a grateful nation with many men and women who wear our Nation's uniform or who recently have. I shared my personal gratitude as well, because their heroism and their sacrifice represent an enduring source of freedom for every other American.

I hope they never forget it. I hope they are reminded when looking out to cheering crowds on the field, because America won't forget what the men and women who stood in our defense have given all of us for our freedom.

So let us hope that our Nation will always find brave warriors like them.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on one final matter, Saturday, June 27, is Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day.

Sadly, post-traumatic stress disorder is an affliction that touches too many of our veterans. Raising awareness of PTSD and combatting the myths and misinformation that surround it are incredibly important. There are effective treatments for PTSD, and all of us can do a few simple things in honor of PTSD Awareness Day.

First, we can learn more about PTSD by getting the facts on the condition and its treatment. We can also reach out to somebody who might have PTSD or be at risk, particularly among the veterans community. And, finally, we can pass along what we learned to others to continue to raise awareness.

So I hope Americans will take action on this PTSD Awareness Day to shed some light on an often misunderstood condition and hopefully to reach out to someone in need.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Arizona.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, before I make a unanimous consent request, I wish to say, for the information of my colleagues, that, as happens on occasion, the legislation of the National Defense Authorization Act was in violation of the Ways and Means jurisdiction in the House, which then led to an automatic blue slip, which means that basically, for all intents and purposes, the entire bill comes to a standstill.

In order to repair that, it requires unanimous consent in the Senate in

order to strike the provision and send it back to the House, without the provision which they found objectionable—their Parliamentarian did—and which required the so-called blue slip.

So I appreciate very much the agreement of the Democratic leader, who agreed to this unanimous consent request, so that we can move forward with a conference on the bill and hopefully, if now things go right, we could get it to the President's desk in July.

I thank the Democratic leader, who has agreed to this unanimous consent request, in order that we might move forward. So I express my appreciation to him for allowing this.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate receives the papers on H.R. 1735, the Secretary of the Senate re-engross the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1735, with the following: Strike section 636.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The bill, H.R. 1735, which was previously ordered to be printed as passed by the Senate, and was printed in the RECORD of Monday, June 22, 2015, was modified by unanimous consent to strike section 636.)

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today in this great country of ours the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare—has survived the latest partisan attempt to deny health coverage to working families. Millions of working families won today. America won today. The Supreme Court ruled against Republicans who were seeking to strip 6.5 million Americans of the subsidies that enable them to buy health insurance coverage. America won, I repeat, very pure, very simple.

More than 10 million Americans are covered in the exchanges operating across the country, many of them insured for the first time, and 85 percent of these men and women receive tax credits that help them afford that coverage.

On top of that, 12 million more Americans now have coverage through the Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs. The Commonwealth Fund recently found that more than 8 in 10 adults—four-fifths—of people who have these programs are satisfied with them. The Affordable Care Act is not perfect. No law ever is. But this law is working for millions—approaching 20 million—Americans.

Once again, the Affordable Care Act prevailed. So I say to my Senate colleagues, respectfully—and I mean that—stop banging your heads against the wall. This legislation passed. It is the law of this Nation. Stop. Move on. Republicans should pause for a minute and look back.

I don't know the number anymore. I don't know, I lost count—is it 75? It is certainly approaching 100—of the actual votes which have taken place to repeal the law. Never even came close to passing, but they have done it time and time again. Stop it. Think of the time wasted doing it. As Einstein said, the pure definition of insanity is someone who keeps doing the same thing over and over again and gets the same results.

I would hope the Republicans would rethink what they have been up to—their reckless, cynical attempts to increase taxes on millions of middle-income families. That is what it amounts to.

I was interested in looking at the paper today regarding what Republicans have suggested doing if the Supreme Court ruled against this law. Every one of them, without exception, would be a tremendous blow to the budgeting process of America. This bill makes America money. It has cut the deficit significantly. That is why I say it makes the country money. It allows for a more healthy nation.

Republicans weren't content to jeopardize the health of Americans in need of coverage assistance in order to exact political revenge against President Obama. They were happy trying to do that. I also think it is important to note that Republicans who worked on this legislation in the process going through the committees here admitted that the legislation drafters never discussed withholding subsidies in the manner suggested by the plaintiffs. Republicans who worked on the legislation said that.

So I think the public has basically had it with Republicans trying to take away a law that protects them from insurance company discrimination when they get sick or hurt. Enough is enough.

I had a ''Welcome to Washington.'' I have them every Thursday. I had a group of people here from Nevada who have family members who suffer from cystic fibrosis. They were able to tell me that for the first time in the lives of their children they could not be denied insurance. They are adults now. They can't be denied insurance coverage because of this law. If this had been repealed, people with cystic fibrosis and many other diseases would not be able to get health insurance. So let's move on. Stop this. Stop wasting the time of the American people by trying to repeal the law.

I appreciate the work done by the Supreme Court, a 6-to-3 decision. It was a good decision, a strong decision that upheld the law. Enough is enough. Let's move on.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the first hour equally divided, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

OBAMACARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, that we are even discussing another of ObamaCare's self-inflicted brushes with the brink—yet again—is the latest indictment of a law that has been a rolling disaster for the American people, a rolling disaster for the American people.

Today's ruling will not change ObamaCare's multitude of broken promises, including the one that resulted in millions—literally millions—of Americans losing the coverage they had and wanted to keep. Today's ruling will not change ObamaCare's spectacular flops—spectacular flops—from humiliating Web site debacles to the total collapse of exchanges in States run by the law's loudest cheerleaders. Today's ruling will not change the skyrocketing costs in premiums, deductibles, and copays that have hit the middle class so hard over the last few years.

The politicians who forced ObamaCare on the American people now have a choice: They can crow about ObamaCare's latest wobble toward the edge or work with us to address the ongoing negative impact of a 2,000-page law that continues to make life literally miserable—miserable—for so many of the same people it purported to help.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I have two very brief comments. One involves our national security and the world at large and the other involves our Nation as a whole.

First, as to the Supreme Court ruling. I am surprised. I am disappointed. But the ruling is now in. Senator MCCONNELL said it well: This doesn't mean ObamaCare is fixed; it means it is going to continue until somebody

finds a better way or we are going to be left with ObamaCare for the rest of our lives and children's lives and those who follow.

The 2016 race domestically will be centered on health care as the most dominant domestic issue in the country. If you are running for the House, if you are running for the Senate or if you are running for President, here is what this Supreme Court ruling means: If the public wants to continue ObamaCare—which I think would be a huge mistake—vote Democrat. If you want to repeal and replace ObamaCare with something better for you and your family, bipartisan, vote Republican.

Hillary Clinton, the most likely Democratic nominee, will make ObamaCare her own. Whomever the Republican Party may nominate, the one thing I can assure you is that they will repeal and replace ObamaCare with something better.

So to the people of the United States: You finally have a chance to have your say. This election in 2016 for the House, the Senate, and the White House will give you a chance to stop ObamaCare and replace it with something better for you and your children. Take advantage of this opportunity. Because if we fail to have the people in place in 2016 to change course, ObamaCare becomes cemented in terms of the American health care system and our economic future. I think it would be a mistake for the ages.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, as I speak, Secretary Kerry is on his way to Geneva to try to conclude nuclear negotiations with the Iranian regime.

To Secretary Kerry: I urge you to suspend negotiations until we clear up two matters.

No. 1, the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khameini said on state-run television in Iran, yesterday and the day before, ''All economic, financial and banking sanctions, implemented either by the United Nations Security Council, the United States Congress or the administration, must be lifted immediately when the deal is signed.'' Secretary Kerry, would you please tell the Ayatollah that is unacceptable and repudiate that statement before you negotiate any further.

The Iranian Parliament, several days ago, passed draft legislation prohibiting the international community from having access to Iranian military facilities to determine the state of the Iranian nuclear program. Secretary Kerry, please suspend negotiations until the Iranian Government repudiates this concept. The P5+1 should be firm in these areas: There will never be a deal signed with Iran that does not allow for anytime, anywhere inspections of nuclear sites, particularly military sites. How can you negotiate any further until they repudiate the actions they have taken?

Please tell me—and I will send you a letter—what to tell my constituents who are very worried about this. I am being overwhelmed by questions: Does the Iranian Parliament action represent the position of the Iranian Government? My answer would be yes. Nothing happens in Iran unless the Ayatollah wants it to happen.

So Secretary Kerry and the P5+1, please tell the Iranians that the action of the Parliament—the statement they have made that we will not be allowed to inspect military facilities as part of a deal—is a nonstarter and walk away until they repudiate that. Please send a message to the Ayatollah through the negotiators that we will not lift sanctions until there is full compliance, until the IAEA has a chance to tell us about the possible military dimensions of their nuclear program. How can you lift sanctions and go forward and give them money until you know exactly what they have been up to in the past?

Secretary Kerry, now is a time for you and President Obama to send a clear message to the Iranians: repudiate these two statements or we will not negotiate any further.

This is the most important decision any President of the United States will make, and we are about to go into negotiations in the final stages with two thought processes on the table coming from the highest level of the Iranian Government: You will not be allowed to inspect military facilities, and we will demand immediate sanctions relief before there is verification.

Those two statements coming from the Iranian leadership must be repudiated—and repudiated now. Walk away, Secretary Kerry, until they repudiate these statements. No more negotiations until we understand, is this a red line for the Iranians. Because if this is their red line, I will now ask you in public: Secretary Kerry, are these positions red lines for the Iranian Government? Have they now adopted a red line that you will never be allowed to inspect military facilities as part of an inspection regime to determine the past development of nuclear weapons in Iran? Secondly, is this now a red line by the Ayatollah; that they will never agree to a deal that doesn't allow for immediate sanctions relief?

I need to know the answer to that question. Are these red lines? And if they are red lines, walk away. And if they are not red lines, have these statements repudiated because this is the most important decision the world will ever make.

God help us all if we enter into a deal with this regime that is not sound, with every i dotted and every t crossed, because the Iranians have been cheating and lying about their nuclear ambitions for well over a decade, and at the end of the day, you can't trust the Iranians.

I urge as strongly as possible that the P5+1 suspend negotiations until the Iranians set the record straight and repudiate these statements about denying us access to military facilities and requiring immediate sanctions relief as part of any deal.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

THE ECONOMY AND HEALTH CARE

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I want to talk a little bit today about jobs and the economy and people's health care, and they are all related. We are in the midst of one of the slowest growth periods for the economy in the recent history of the United States. They just revised the figures again. That makes three times the figures have been revised for the last quarter. They now show a two-tenths of 1 percent growth. They should be showing about 2 percent growth for the year.

Why is that a problem? If the economy increases by just 1 percent, it results in $300 billion to $400 billion more tax revenue without raising taxes. That is where we need to be. When it is less than that 2 percent, that means we are losing that much in additional money. We make these decisions on about $1,100 billion a year, and we are overspending that by $468 billion. That is almost 50 percent overspending. No family can afford to do that, no city can afford to do that, and no State can afford to do that, but apparently the Federal Government can because we just borrowed more. So far, there is a lot of confidence in this country that we can continue to borrow.

One of the areas where job growth and economy growth are impeded is with health care. President Obama is disconnected from the harsh reality that this health care law has created for people. Almost 2 weeks ago, speaking about his health care law, the President said:

> Part of what's bizarre about this whole thing is, we haven't had a lot of conversation about the horrors of ObamaCare because none of them have come to pass.

None of them have come to pass? How insulated is our President? I just want to emphasize what he said—none of those horror stories have come to pass.

Apparently that message didn't make it very far because I hear a drastically different story from folks across Wyoming and other parts of the country.

A rancher from Gillette complained to me that her and her husband's health insurance went up from $11,000 per year to $20,000 per year and then had a deductible thrown in that was $6,500. She said: How is that affordable?

A retired nurse from Casper told me that if you add the premium increases and the deductible increases, she and her husband are up $36,000 per year.

She wrote: Health care is unaffordable. It is a huge burden and worry. How can people afford to pay more for health care than they make in a year?

She said that ObamaCare doesn't provide them with coverage for their medical needs and added that it goes

against everything they believe in for America.

A man from Cheyenne said the President's health care law is forcing him to choose between paying for his health care or paying for his mortgage.

A small business owner in Newcastle said that before the affordable health care law, she could afford to pay for her employees' health care. After the law went into force, she couldn't. Her employees couldn't afford it, either, so they might leave for a bigger company—which probably isn't possible—and the small business owner might have to sell out to a bigger company, which in many of the towns in Wyoming also isn't going to be possible. She loves her community and wants to stay an active part of it. She is discouraged by the situation this health care law has created and is asking for help.

We have been asking for help for several years now. The President has recognized that there needs to be some help; otherwise, there will be some real calamities. Why haven't they happened? Well, some of them have. I have described some of them to you. But some of them haven't happened. That is because the President has given waivers on some of the things that he knows are atrocious and will cause a huge problem with the economy of the United States. Does he have the authority to do the waivers? Not really, but he did them, and that is to put off the tragedies until later. That is not what we ought to be doing. We ought to be making health care more affordable. There are lots of plans around here for making it more affordable; most of those were just discarded.

The bill that went through here went through—there was a 60-vote majority on that side of the aisle. Sixty votes is enough to pass anything through here. I hope neither party has a 60-vote majority again because you don't have to listen to the other side. You don't have to listen to the unintended consequences that might come from somebody who is knowledgeable because of their background. There are a bunch of different backgrounds who serve here and another 435 backgrounds who serve on the House side. Why do we have so many people in Congress? So that we have those diverse backgrounds and we can find those unintended consequences and adjust for them.

The people I mentioned are real people, real families. They didn't write the story. They and many more like them contacted me. They are telling me and they are telling all of us in Washington to do something about this unworkable health care bill for millions of Americans that is far from affordable, breaks promises, and makes lives harder. I am listening to them, and so should the torch carriers of this federally mandated dream that was broken before it began.

Today's Supreme Court ruling on King v. Burwell is surprising, but it reminds all of us who warned against this health care law that we will have our work cut out for us to move our country away from the failed policies. This law was written and implemented in its entirety by one party, as I mentioned, and has been informed from the start by ideology rather than reality.

There are a number of us who were working on health care before the President even became a Senator, and we have continued to work on it. We have had a lot of discarded ideas that could have increased competition and brought prices down.

This law was written and implemented in its entirety by one party, and it has been informed from the start by ideology rather than reality. Yet, it has fallen to us to make things better and help people get through these difficulties caused by this law.

The Federal Government cannot possibly know what is best for each individual, and, as we have seen, a one-size-fits-all dictate doesn't work. The Wyoming folks whose stories I just relayed and the millions more like them from every State are a testament to that. That is just a very small sample out of the hundreds of people who write to me or talk to me as I travel across Wyoming. Our focus is to offer each of them new choices for quality affordable health care. Our focus is not protecting this failed law, this busted political legacy. We want to protect families as we get rid of ObamaCare and transition away from this fiasco. That is what it is, as is illustrated by the testimonials that I talked about earlier and the hundreds more that I have.

It is time for Republicans and Democrats to truly deliver on the President's broken promise of a health care system that expands access and promotes quality and has patient-centered care while actually bringing the costs down. That is possible, just not under that bill. This is an opportunity for both parties to work together and put into place real solutions that rely on these principles.

I think they just announced that one of the Federal insurance co-ops is going out of business. All of them are severely in the red. Those would be government-sponsored entities that said too much was being charged for health care by many of the insurance companies, and they went for far lower premiums. The hope was that it would bring down the price, but it didn't. That is not the way to encourage the kind of competition we need if we are going to bring down health care costs.

One of the things that has been focused on around here for a long time has been small business health plans or small businesses. Small businesses are the ones that are really having the problem.

I ran into a man who said: I have a very successful business, and I just got a tremendous location that is only 50 miles away where I could open another one. But that would put me over 50 employees, and that puts me in a different category on health care costs. The people who are working for me like the health care costs I am providing, and I would have to go to a whole different level or pay huge fines, and I can't afford to do that. So I am not going to open that other location; I am not going to put 50 more people to work.

For too long, the debate over health care has placed politics over the best interests of patients. No matter the Court's ruling, it is time for Democrats and Republicans to deliver what the President promised but ultimately failed to deliver. We need a health system that expands access and promotes quality, patient-centered care while actually bringing down the costs. We must allow States the freedom and flexibility to ensure that hard-working Americans can get the care they need. It is time for both parties to work together on real solutions that rely on these principles. We should move forward on a bipartisan basis to provide more choices and a better health care system for hard-working Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor to congratulate my colleague, the senior Senator from Wyoming, whom I have worked with for many years and who has been a true leader in true health care reform with proposals he has made that would actually help people get affordable care.

The Obama health care law, regardless of the ruling of the Supreme Court, continues to be an expensive failure. There have been so many broken promises by this President about health care in America, which, to me, is the reason this health care law—the support for it across the country remains at an alltime low.

People were promised that if they liked their coverage, they could keep their coverage. Millions have lost coverage. The President promised: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. Millions have lost their doctors. The President said premiums would go down by $2,500 per family. Instead, premiums have gone up, and there is no end in sight.

When I take a look at this and say ''Why is the support so low?'' it is because most people believe that for them personally, it is a bad deal. They are paying more in premiums, higher copays, and higher deductibles, all of which makes it a bad deal for them personally.

I would say that ObamaCare cannot be fixed, but health care in America must be fixed.

They say: What are you going to do about it as a Republican?

There are incredible Republican plans out there, each of which is much better than the President's health care law. We still have 30 million Americans without insurance, concerned about the fact that they still need care. We are going to continue to work to repeal and replace this health care law with a law that will allow people to get what

Senator ENZI had been talking about. We need patients to get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs. That is what Republicans are committed to, and that is what Republicans, in spite of today's ruling by the Supreme Court, will continue to work for.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, hopefully, we can move on. After a Presidential election, two Supreme Court cases, 60-plus votes to repeal the Affordable Care Act in the House of Representatives, and endless debates here in the Senate, maybe now is the moment where Republicans will choose to close the books on trying to strip away from millions of Americans the benefits they have received from the Affordable Care Act. This is an important day for over 10 million Americans who have health care right now because of the Affordable Care Act. I would argue it is an important day as well for the separation of powers and the recognition that it is the legislative body that sets the policy for this country.

I just wanted to come down to the floor for a few minutes to express my hope and my desire that proponents of the Affordable Care Act—such as myself, Senator STABENOW, and Senator BALDWIN—who have come down to the floor over and over during the course of the last 3 years don't have to do it anymore. I would love to come down to the floor and talk about the need to fix our transportation system or the need for mental health reform. I would love to talk about tax reform. I have come down to the floor over and over to defend the Affordable Care Act simply because it has been perpetually under attack despite the fact that its successes are now unparalleled.

Justice Roberts, in the decision today—I won't quote from it at length—said: ''Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not to destroy them.'' That is essentially the operative phrase in today's decision. We passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance marketplaces, not to destroy them, and that is what it has done. It has improved marketplaces all across the country. Why? Because people have voted with their feet. The 10 to 11 million people who signed up for either expanded Medicare, Medicaid coverage or these exchanges have shown us that the law works as intended because they didn't stay out or deem it to be unaffordable. They stepped in and bought coverage.

We should now be in the business of perfecting this law. None of us, frankly, think that this law is perfect. Many of us are open to conversations about how to make it better and how to perfect it. Now that the Supreme Court has completely shut the door to a judicial repeal of the act, and after having debate after debate, hopefully it is clear that there are not the votes—nor the support, obviously, in the executive branch—to repeal the act, and we can move on to something else.

This is an old chart of mine that I have in the Chamber. I brought this down to the floor several months ago when a colleague of ours suggested that the administration shouldn't be celebrating the successes of the Affordable Care Act, as if people receiving health insurance for the first time in their life wasn't something to celebrate, as if 17 million children with preexisting conditions who will never have their health care taken away from them wasn't something to celebrate, and as if 9.4 million senior citizens who are saving $15 billion on drugs isn't something to celebrate. I get excited when I talk about the Affordable Care Act not only because it is a really sober and important topic but because when I talk to my constituents back home, they are excited. They are bubbling over with enthusiasm. Those of them who never had the chance to get health coverage before the Affordable Care Act and those who worried every single night, sick that their child wouldn't be able to live a normal life because their existence would be obsessed with whether they were able to cover their complicated illness with insurance, are bubbling over with enthusiasm.

There are millions of people who are celebrating this decision today, and it is a sober day because, hopefully, we will be able to have a conversation about how we can move on to another topic. But it is a day to celebrate, not only for the 6.4 million Americans, first and foremost, who would have had their insurance taken away by an adverse decision, but for all Americans who would have been caught up in an insurance death spiral had the decision gone the other way.

I hope we can limit our discussions about the Affordable Care Act to ways in which we can make it work better.

So I hope we can now spend more time talking about other topics that matter to this country. I hope the House of Representatives decides to give up this obsession with repealing the Affordable Care Act, which is something that is simply not going to happen. And for its opponents out in the field, the Supreme Court has shut the doors to a judicial repeal of the Affordable Care Act today.

I think of a lot of stories when I think about what the Affordable Care Act has meant to the people of Connecticut. We have cut our uninsurance rates in half in Connecticut. We have one of the best running exchanges in the country. But one of the simplest stories is the only one I will convey as I wrap up this morning.

I was at the community pool that my family goes to in Cheshire, CT, and I was in the pool with my then 2-year-old just shortly after passage of the Affordable Care Act.

A young man about my age came up to me, and he said: Listen, I am sorry, Mr. MURPHY, to disturb you; I know you are here with your son, but I have a little boy, too, and he has a congenital heart problem. Every single day since he has been born, I have worried that he wouldn't get to live out his dreams because his life decisions would be dictated by whether or not he could get insurance to cover all of the complicated health care needs he is going to have and that would be determinative of his path in life, not his dreams, his desires for himself.

He said: I get it that this is going to help a lot of people in very practical and economic ways, but I just want to thank you because now I sleep better at night knowing that my son is going to be able to get covered, that my son is going to be able to lead a relatively normal life, and that he can be whatever he wants to be.

That is the benefit the Affordable Care Act brings people. It is not just practical. It is not just economic. It is not just the battle over whether somebody has health insurance. It is psychological. It is peace of mind.

The Supreme Court protected 6.4 million people from losing their health insurance today, but they also protected tens of millions of patients and parents and sons and daughters and grandparents from losing that peace of mind that comes with the protections from an Affordable Care Act that is working.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, earlier today the Supreme Court issued its long-awaited ruling in King v. Burwell. As we now know, the Court has once again decided to rule against common sense and the plain meaning of statutory language in order to uphold the poorly drafted Affordable Care Act—which, by the way, Justice Roberts says has a lot of ambiguity and poor draftsmanship. Even worse, with today's decision, the Court's ruling failed to hold the Obama administration accountable for its reckless execution of its own law.

The plain text of the Affordable Care Act authorizes subsidies only through State exchanges, not the Federal exchange. This decision will allow the administration to continue to ignore the law in order to implement its own preferred policies.

(Mrs. FISCHER assumed the Chair.)

As Justice Scalia said in his dissent, ''We should start calling this law SCOTUScare.'' Only Justice Scalia would come up with something like that, which I find extremely humorous.

Justice Scalia continued, saying:

Perhaps the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act will attain the enduring status of the Social Security Act or the Taft-Hartley Act; perhaps not. But this Court's two decisions on the Act will surely be remembered through the years. The somersaults of statutory interpretation . . . they have performed will be cited by litigants endlessly, to the confusion of honest jurisprudence. And the cases publish forever the discouraging truth that the Supreme Court of the United States favors some laws over others, and is prepared to do whatever it takes to assist its favorites.

I couldn't have said it any better myself.

Needless to say, I am disappointed at this decision, as I know many throughout the country are, but at the same time I am undeterred.

As I said on the floor last week, ObamaCare has been nothing but a long series of broken promises that include skyrocketing costs, reduced access to care, and more government mandates hanging over our health care system.

Today's ruling changes none of that. Just because the Court decided to misinterpret, in my opinion, the statute doesn't mean that the law suddenly works and that all is now right with the world. For the good of our health care system and hardworking taxpayers throughout our country, we still need to chart a new course on health care policy. Unfortunately, with the current occupant of the White House, those kinds of reforms are not currently possible.

But make no mistake, Republicans in Congress have a plan to help the American people by repealing ObamaCare and replacing it with reforms that will put patients—not Washington bureaucrats—in charge of their own health care decisions.

I am coauthor of the Patient CARE Act, a legislative proposal that would replace ObamaCare with real reforms that would actually reduce health costs without all the burdensome mandates that have come part and parcel with the so-called Affordable Care Act—which is anything but affordable. Moving forward, I, along with the coauthors of this proposal, Senator BURR and Chairman UPTON over in the House, will continue to seek input from experts and stakeholders and use every opportunity to give States more freedom and flexibility.

Once again, any workable reform must lower costs and put patients first. That is the only way we will end the negative consequences of ObamaCare and help the American people move past this misguided attempt at health care reform.

The American people deserve better, and Republicans in Congress are united in our commitment to make sure we do better on health care reform in the future.

Now, I had suspected that this is the way the court would decide and it is a big enough bill that extremely clever judges could find a way to rule how they did today. And there are few justices as clever as the Chief Justice. I have tremendous respect for him.

And though he used his talents to uphold this law, he did it with aplomb and unparalleled legal skill. I have had colleagues bad-mouth the Chief Justice for this case and especially the Sebelius case.

What few of my colleagues remember, however, is that in the Sebelius decision, the Chief Justice led the way to preserve for States the right to make their own decisions with regard to whether to undertake a Medicaid expansion or not.

Under Obamacare, the Democrats wanted to force the hands of the States—either expand the program, or you would lose all access to Medicaid funds.

That was coercion, pure and simple, and the Court ruled accordingly. And Justice Roberts wrote the opinion, which was joined, at least with regard to the Medicaid expansion, by all conservative justices on the Court.

The Court's decision preserved a real and meaningful choice for the States, and States have used that ability to choose in different ways. Some have expanded Medicaid. Some have not. Some have tried to use waiver authority to craft solutions that work for them. This flexibility is how it should work.

All I can say is that the Chief Justice is a remarkable judge. He is a tremendous human being. I have a tremendous confidence in him and I believe in him. I differ with him on this opinion though. This ruling will not solve any of the problems inherent in Obamacare, as we can see from the continually skyrocketing costs of health care and insurance coverage.

As I have said, clever judges can find ambiguities where none exist. Clever judges can find ambiguities that others may not be able to find. And despite the Chief Justice's brilliance and integrity of character, we need to repeal Obamacare and replace it with something better.

I believe, with Chairman UPTON in the House, and Senator BURR, that the Patient CARE Act is one of the best solutions out there. I urge all of my colleagues to read through our proposal and offer constructive criticism. We need an off-ramp from Obamacare to an actually affordable, and privatized, health care system. Only then can we give every day Americans the economic growth and prosperity they deserve.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Colorado.

REACH ACT

Mr. GARDNER. Madam President, today I wish to discuss the REACH Act, legislation that I have introduced with my colleague, the senior Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY, to establish a new category for critical access hospitals in financial distress.

Rural hospitals are an essential yet vulnerable part of our health care system. Rural residents face a unique set of challenges in relation to their urban counterparts. According to the American Hospital Association, rural residents are typically older, poorer, and more likely to have chronic diseases than those living in more developed cities. The unique challenges of caring for patients in underserved areas are not the only hurdles that face rural hospitals today. They have a hard time simply keeping their doors open.

Since January of 2010, approximately 55 rural hospitals nationwide have closed because they could not generate the kind of support or the volume necessary to continue operation. In Colorado, nearly 60 percent of care for patients in underserved areas is provided by hospitals dependent on rural payment mechanisms, and many hospitals are in danger of closing their doors.

I would like to share with you a story about the impact of a rural hospital in my hometown of Yuma, CO, as shared by the CEO of the hospital. Now, I will also tell you that the name of the CEO of the hospital is John Gardner. John Gardner also happens to be the name of my father. They are two different people. My father sells farm equipment. This John Gardner runs a hospital. I think I can tell you that both of them have gotten complaints.

My dad has gotten complaints about the emergency room bill, and John Gardner, this CEO of the hospital, has gotten complaints about a tractor overhaul bill. But they are two different people. But this John Gardner, the CEO of the hospital, does live right next to me in this small town of right around 3,000 people. This is what he said, the CEO of the hospital:

Because we are located in a rural farming community, we see many farming accidents and motor vehicle accidents. Gravel roads are not the driver's friend. In partnership with the city ambulance service, we have invested a lot of time and training and equipment to be prepared to respond to these accidents. We have two young adults in our community who were involved in serious automobile accidents on gravel roads. Both had severe head trauma which without immediate stabilization would have had terminal outcomes.

Because of our hospital we were able to treat and transport both to level 1 trauma centers for complete treatment and following extensive rehabilitation are now back with their families.

Stories like this and the invaluable lifesaving services provided by rural

hospitals are why we need a new system, a new system that recognizes the financial challenges and obstacles that rural hospitals face today. Without an adjustment, there may be more facilities closing. A 2014 report by the National Rural Health Association identified 283 additional hospitals at risk of closing.

Now, we saw 55 nationwide hospitals already close. An additional 283 rural hospitals around the country are at risk of closing. Ensuring that rural communities have access to the lifesaving care they need is why I am introducing—and joining Senator GRASSLEY—the Rural Emergency Acute Care Hospital Act or the REACH Act.

The REACH Act aims to allow rural hospitals which are in financial distress to become a new category of hospital, called a rural emergency hospital. Here is the problem and why we need to pass the REACH Act. Under current law, critical access hospitals are classified as hospitals maintaining no more than 25 acute care beds. These hospitals rely on rural payment mechanism for Medicare reimbursements for outpatient, inpatient, laboratory, therapy services, and post-acute swing-bed services.

As the medical service industry has evolved, patients find it more and more attractive to have services requiring rural hospital admission performed in large city hospitals because inpatient services are delivered there on a more routine basis. We see more people leaving rural hospitals to go to the city hospitals because they perform these inpatient services more regularly.

The problem, of course, is that leaves rural hospitals without enough inpatient volume to cover their costs, oftentimes resulting in hospital closures. So when a critical access hospital—again, these are hospitals defined under the law as 25 acute care beds. When a critical access hospital has to shut its doors for inpatient services, it has to stop providing inpatient services, it also means the emergency care closes with it.

So now you have a hospital no longer providing inpatient services and no longer offering emergency care. But as highlighted by my hometown story—the story I just shared from the CEO of the hospital, timely access to emergency services is truly the difference between life and death. Those two young men who would have faced a terminal outcome were saved because of the availability of a rural hospital emergency room.

So when dealing with life-threatening injuries, it is critical for patients to receive the kind of health care they need, that lifesaving care to prevent the terminal outcome within the golden hour. That is something doctors and hospitals use—a term for medical professionals—meaning that hour after injury where it is absolutely critical that they receive treatment, that can make the difference between survival—if they do not receive their care during this critical golden hour, their condition could rapidly deteriorate.

Recent statistics from the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 60 percent of trauma deaths in the United States occur in rural areas but only represent 15 percent of the overall population. So if we are talking about why we need access to rural emergency hospitals, the statistic is very clear: 60 percent of rural trauma deaths in this country occur amongst a population that only represents 15 percent of the overall population. That is a pretty dramatic number.

It is critical that we provide rural hospitals that are under financial distress the necessary tools to prevent closures for those living in isolated areas, to make sure they have the same access to emergency services. The solution is the REACH Act, a solution Senator GRASSLEY and I are working on together, to allow rural hospitals in financial distress to switch from being a critical access hospital to this new category called a rural emergency hospital.

This new category would offer reimbursement rates that are consistent with the care, needs, and capabilities of rural hospitals, but more importantly allowing them to remain open, keeping that critical emergency room service open. Now, the emergency hospital must provide emergency medical care and observation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by onsite staff.

So we are still providing quality care, but we are allowing them to overcome the fact that they have seen their inpatient services decline, enabling them to keep their emergency services open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to make sure trauma patients can see the doctor and be provided the necessary medical care they need during that all-important golden hour.

The bill would also establish protocols for the timely transfer of patients in need of a higher level of care and patient admittance. The Presiding Officer and I both came from rural States, where we know—there are hospitals in our States that are facing financial challenges. There have been stories in newspapers in Colorado about the struggles some communities are having maintaining their services, keeping their doors open. But there are stories in each and every one of these communities like the story John Gardner told about those two young people in my hometown who otherwise would have had a terminal outcome but for the availability of the emergency care in rural Colorado.

So to avoid missing out on the services necessary to keep people alive, to make sure rural patients have access to care during that critical golden hour, the REACH Act provides our hospitals with an opportunity to keep health services and hospitals available across rural America—available, open with emergency care, giving troubled hospitals an avenue to keep their doors open and to keep providing the lifesaving care we all so desperately want in each of our communities, rural or urban.

I thank the Presiding Officer for the time on the floor today. I urge my colleagues to support the REACH Act. We are always reaching out for more cosponsors in a bipartisan fashion to make sure we can do the best job possible providing health care to rural America, to urban America, and to make sure we keep these hospitals open.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I rise today to discuss my hometown of Baltimore and the city's recovery after the civil unrest related to the Freddie Gray case. But first let me say a few words about the heartbreaking events in South Carolina. Words are inadequate to express the heartache of yet another mass shooting. Gun violence regularly takes far too many victims in Baltimore and other cities across the country, but to have a place of worship violated in such a hateful way is inexplicable.

My prayers are with the Mother Emanuel AME Church, its congregants, and the people of Charleston, SC, at this difficult time. I appreciate the Department of Justice's swiftness in opening a hate crimes investigation of this tragedy. Despite the alarming frequency of such shootings, we as a nation cannot become complacent and immune to the pain and anguish caused by these instances.

Every time a senseless shooting takes place, there should be more and more of us who shout to the Heavens in protest as loudly as we can. As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children to focus on things that unite all people and to view differences as strengths, rather than seeds for hatred and resentment. As lawmakers, we need to move from a place of political inertia to stop guns from getting into the hands of people who use them for the wrong reasons. We have mourned too many good people—men, women, and children—to stand idly by.

I am pleased State leaders have come together for the removal of the Confederate flag from the grounds of South Carolina's statehouse. I urge the State legislature to move quickly to permanently remove this symbol of intolerance from government facilities.

BALTIMORE ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Now, as I travel around Baltimore, and particularly the neighborhoods that are trying to recover, I hear a recurring theme from constituents: They don't feel their government truly represents them and their interests. They don't feel government has fully invested in recovery efforts in

their communities. They don't feel fully enfranchised.

So what steps have the local government and Federal Government taken so far? We have seen our State's attorney in Baltimore indict several police officers on numerous criminal charges as a result of the death of Freddie Gray. Mr. Gray suffered a severe spinal cord injury while in police custody, which ultimately led to his death.

The judge in this case has scheduled a trial to begin in October. At the Federal level, even before the Freddie Gray case, I had called for the Justice Department to intervene regarding allegations of brutality and misconduct by the Baltimore Police Department. In October 2014, the Maryland congressional delegation sent a letter to the Justice Department in support of greater Federal involvement with our local police force.

DOJ agreed to this request and opened a collaborative review process with their COPS Office in Baltimore City. Shortly after the Freddie Gray case came to light in April of 2015, I sent a letter, along with the Maryland congressional delegation, asking the Justice Department to open a pattern or practice investigation into civil rights violations in the Baltimore Police Department.

DOJ agreed to this request and opened the investigation, which is still ongoing, at the same time that the State trial for the police officers is occurring. For those of us who live in Baltimore, the events over those last couple of weeks have been heartbreaking. The city we love has gone through very difficult times. I wish to thank my colleagues who have contacted Senator MIKULSKI and me for offering their help, for offering their understanding, and for their willingness to work together so we can deal with the issues that have been raised in Baltimore and other cities and other places around our country.

It is our responsibility to move forward. The people of Baltimore understand that. We understand the national spotlight will be leaving, and we are going to deal with the issues that are left behind. I want to thank the administration for their high-level involvement as Baltimore gets back on its feet. Our congressional delegation and Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has had the opportunity to meet at the White House with senior administration officials and Cabinet Secretaries to support our local priorities, including jobs, economic growth, education, housing, and law enforcement.

I thank President Obama for making Baltimore a top priority. Team Maryland is committed to working with the White House and Cabinet agencies to ensure that the tools and resources available from the Federal Government—from improving housing and increasing quality jobs to supporting our schools and small businesses, to providing citizens with second chances and expanding programs to rebuild the trust between neighborhoods and law enforcement—are brought to bear in Baltimore as a national model for the restoration of hope and opportunities in our cities.

As Congressman CUMMINGS has said: This is a transformational moment for Baltimore. It is finally time that we look at comprehensive steps to restore hope and trust in our neighborhoods. We need to ensure that all our citizens' rights are preserved, while giving police the tools they need to reengage with families and individuals that they are there to protect.

Last week, I introduced the BALTIMORE Act, S. 1610, with Senator MIKULSKI as my cosponsor. The legislation stands for Building and Lifting Trust in Order to Multiply Opportunities and Racial Equality. The components of the BALTIMORE Act are powerful antidotes to many of the long-term ills facing our city and others. We must simultaneously promote economic development and opportunities for our cities.

But this bill gives individuals and law enforcement a second chance to do the right thing and contribute in a positive way to their families, their neighborhoods, and the larger community. The BALTIMORE Act contains legislation from this Senator and other Senators as well as new legislative ideas. The BALTIMORE Act consists of four titles. The first title deals with law enforcement. The BALTIMORE Act contains the text of my legislation, S. 1056, which is the End Racial Profiling Act. I have talked on the floor before about ending racial profiling. It should have no place in law enforcement in our communities. It is counterproductive, it turns communities against law enforcement, it is costly, and it can be deadly.

Now, if you have specific information about a person who has committed a crime, you can use that. That is not profiling. But when you target a community solely because of race, that has to end. The first title of the BALTIMORE Act also contains several reforms championed by Senator MIKULSKI, as part of the Commerce, Justice, Science appropriations bill, approved by the committee for fiscal year 2016.

The legislation would require local law enforcement officials receiving Byrne-JAG and COPS Hiring Program funds to submit officer training information to the DOJ, including how their officers are trained in the use of force, countering racial and ethnic bias, deescalating conflicts, and constructive engagement with the public. It requires State and local police departments to promptly submit the use-of-force data to the FBI.

The legislation requires the Department of Justice to issue a report on a plan to assist State and local law enforcement agencies to improve training in the use of force, in identifying racial and ethnic bias, and in conflict resolution through the course of officers' careers.

The final piece of this title I act establishes a pilot program to assist local law enforcement in purchasing or leasing body-worn cameras and requires privacy study. I thank Senators SCHATZ and PAUL for introducing this legislation as the CAMERA Act, S. 877.

The second title involves voting rights reform and civil rights restoration. It includes the text from my legislation, S. 772, the Democracy Restoration Act.

My legislation will restore voting privileges for those who have completed their prison terms. I know I have support on both sides of the aisle. We have had a vote on this, and a near majority have agreed on it. Those who opposed it said it was on the wrong bill. Well, let's move it forward.

Once individuals have completed their sentencing, they should be welcomed back to our community so that they can be productive, law-abiding citizens, so they know they have become part of our community and they believe they have a future.

They should be able to serve on our juries. There is not a person in the Senate who didn't have a second chance sometime in their life. We should look at second-chance opportunities. In part our legislation provides additional funding for second-chance type programs that would employ those who have had criminal convictions. We also have the sense of Congress to end ''check-the-box'' so that in Federal contracts all persons have an opportunity to participate.

The third title deals with sentencing reform. I have spoken to some of my colleagues about some of the sentencing guidelines we have in this country. We need to take a look at our criminal justice system and the sentencing guidelines to recognize that if a person is of a certain race, a certain religion or ethnic background, that person is much more likely to end up in prison today even though the instance of violating the laws are not different in that community than in other communities in the country. We have to deal with it. The country has to deal with it.

The fourth title of the bill—the last title—deals with the reentry programs that I have already talked about. We need to finance those.

It may take time for Baltimore to recover fully from the damage done to its business and national image by the tragic events following the recent death of Freddie Gray, but this great city will come back. I am optimistic when it comes to Baltimore's future. From its earliest days, Baltimore's industrial and financial business sectors have proven themselves resilient and innovative, and these same qualities will be vital in the days ahead.

I am confident that together we can find ways to help Baltimore recover and grow all sectors of its diverse economy, spurring community improvements along way.

We also need to have a serious discussion about sentencing reform and finding ways to restore the lost trust between law enforcement and the communities they serve. The BALTIMORE Act will allow us to move decisively in that direction by ending racial profiling, increasing accountability, collecting critical crime data such as officer-related shootings, and providing real strategies and resources to strengthen police-community relations. These measures will help protect the rights of every American on every side of our justice system.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority whip.

OBAMACARE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, when I have constituents come to Washington, DC, I typically will describe this as being a little bit like Disneyland. It is a lot of fun to visit, with a lot of excitement. A lot of things happening here, but it is not real. It is not real.

What I mean by that is that what is real are the lives that are lived by the average American families all across this country, whether it is Nebraska, Texas or elsewhere and the struggles they have trying to raise their children, trying to get a good education, trying to keep a job—to keep a job that has good wages and one that hopefully grows over time. But in Washington, the focus is typically on winners and losers—winners and losers. If you look at almost any newspaper each week in Washington, they will talk about the winners and the losers. Usually, they are talking about political figures such as the President of the United States.

So I just happened to catch one headline that talked about the President being the biggest winner of the week in Washington, DC.

Why? Well, one is because of the trade promotion authority legislation that we passed that we worked with the President on. That happened to be a subject that I agreed with the President on—the importance of opening new markets to the things that we grow, the livestock we raise, and the manufactured goods we make. Hopefully, we will be able to enter into a good deal on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, opening up 40 percent of the world's economy in Asia to the new markets for the things that we make, grow, and the livestock we raise.

So that happened to be a subject on which I agreed with the President. He had more problems with his own party. We got 13 Senate Democrats to join us in passing this legislation, but we got it done. I think in that instance—maybe you could call the President a winner if you want—you could say that the American people were the winner, and I think that would be accurate too.

But on the loser's side of the ledger, we had a disappointing decision by the U.S. Supreme Court today, where they ignored the clear language that Congress wrote when the Affordable Care Act was passed in March of 2010. Even worse, while the press may consider that this represents a win for the President, there is no question in my mind that the vast majority of the American people are the losers as a result of this decision. The fact is that ObamaCare has been a disaster for millions of hard-working families, and it was really sold under false pretenses.

The President said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

Well, that ended up not being true.

If you like your policy, you can keep your policy.

Well, that ended up not being true for roughly 5 million people who lost their insurance coverage that they liked because the law said they couldn't keep it anymore.

Then there was the fact that the President said this: Prices of health coverage for an average family will come down $2,500.

None of those proved to be true.

So despite the Supreme Court's disappointing decision, I will not stand down in my opposition to this bad law, because I know we can do better. I look forward to working with our colleagues to eventually protect the American people from the harmful effects of ObamaCare and get the American people what they thought they were going to get out of health care reform in the first place—coverage they wanted at a price they could afford, neither one of which is delivered under ObamaCare.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as I indicated initially, this Congress—and particularly the Senate—has had an unusually productive period of time of late. It may be hard for some people to believe, but the most common word I heard used to describe Congress last year, and in recent years, has been ''dysfunctional.'' But we have actually been functioning very well. We have been able to accomplish quite a bit.

Today the Senate is marked by something that we refer to as regular order. What does that mean? It means that we operate according to the rules, where not only the majority but also the minority get to participate in the process, both at committees and on the floor of the Senate. If anybody has a good idea, they can offer that idea, and they can actually get a vote on it up or down.

I was pleased to read in the Wall Street Journal yesterday that two former Republican majority leaders wrote that they were encouraged to see ''the Senate addressing big problems after years of inaction.'' I couldn't agree more.

Bringing the amendment process back is one obvious way we have done so under the new majority after years of inaction. Now that may sound like inside baseball or just talking about procedure, but by allowing Members of both parties—the minority and the majority—to offer their ideas on legislation, we have restored the ability of all Members of the Senate, as elected representatives of the people, to cast our votes on numerous issues that affect all of our constituents and the country.

But restoring such a simple process, one that had been largely absent during the years the minority leader held the reins, represents a real sign of progress.

At the beginning of this year, it was reported that just 3 weeks into the new Senate, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader had allowed during the last year in its entirety. Let me say that again, because it is pretty shocking. In the first 3 weeks of this year, we had voted on more amendments than the minority leader—when he was majority leader—allowed in the entire previous year.

Well, it would mean nothing if it didn't reflect the core philosophy of the new leadership of this Chamber. In other words, our successes on amendment votes didn't stop after our first month in the new Congress. I am now proud to say that voting is now the norm, instead of the exception to the rule.

What did our constituents send us here to do, if not to vote? During the last 6 months, the Senate has voted on 136 amendments in legislation, compared to just 15 last year. We are working for the American people, and, more importantly, the Congress is now working on their behalf and actually beginning to solve real problems that have lingered for years.

But we have done more than just allow amendments and votes on amendments. During the last few months, we have passed more than 40 bipartisan bills. Now, if anybody has been here for very long, one of the things they learned, perhaps to their chagrin, is that you can't do anything around here on a purely partisan basis. You just don't have the numbers to do it—with some notable exceptions. But we passed more than 40 bipartisan bills, and we have seen 18 of those already signed into law by the President.

This includes important legislation that I am very proud of called the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which passed this Chamber 99 to 0 and is focused on making sure we help the victims of modern-day slavery recover and rebuild their lives and making sure that these women, typically teenage girls, are treated as victims and not criminals.

We have also passed other important legislation, such as the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This law will give Congress the time and space to closely scrutinize any deal that the President negotiates with Iran concerning its pursuit of nuclear weapons. In so doing, we will make sure that the American people, through their elected representatives, can voice their opinions on what could be a bad deal that

could jeopardize our national security and that of our allies, such as the nation of Israel.

Then there is the National Defense Authorization Act, which was passed this last week and which will provide our men and women in uniform the authorities and the resources they need to protect and defend our Nation against rising threats around the world.

And, as I mentioned at the beginning, just yesterday we passed trade promotion authority, which will soon be heading to the President's desk. It provides Texas farmers, ranchers, and small businesses the opportunity to find new markets around the world through pending and future trade agreements.

We also see significant progress in many other bills that the Senate may soon consider, bills that our committee chairs have been tirelessly moving forward. This includes more than 110 bills that have been reported out of committee and legislation such as the PATENT Act, a bill I have been very involved in, which helps startups and small businesses that are too often wasting their time and money fighting costly, frivolous litigation.

It is good to see that the Senate is back working for the American people, and it is my hope that we can, on a bipartisan basis, continue to build on our strong record so far this Congress and to continue to work productively, where we can, to serve those who elected us.

The Senate is starting to build some momentum. With several appropriations bills looming, we need to keep getting things done and to continue providing real solutions to the problems it faces.

Although my friends across the aisle suggested that they will launch a filibuster summer, I would like to stress that would undercut the good progress and the productivity we have demonstrated so far, and it would also frustrate the American people and only harm those whom we are sent here to represent, not the least of which are our troops and veterans.

So let's do away with this irresponsible idea of a filibuster summer, and let's work together to try to do the Nation's business.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I wish to say a couple of things before I speak to the issue that brought me to the floor today.

I have been listening to our leader from Texas talk about so many of the advances we have seen in the Senate this session. I think it is important to acknowledge and note that we are making progress. Often we get labeled in the media for being that ''do-nothing Congress,'' that entity which is just engaged in loggerheads and deadlock. But I think the truth is and the facts on the ground are that we are seeing substantive legislation passed, just as the Senator from Texas has noted.

I was pleased to lead off the Senate with the first bill on the floor in this Congress—the Keystone XL Pipeline. It was good to be back at work in a body that was entertaining amendments from both sides and offered by my colleagues without any direction or dictation from the majority side—an opportunity for the give-and-take that comes with not only good debate but not knowing whether your amendment is going to pass or fail. That is how the legislative process works.

The occupant of the Chair is a former member of a State body, as am I. We know that is how you build legislation, the good, constructive back-and-forth. We saw that with the Keystone XL debate. We moved that through both bodies. The President chose to veto it. I think it is a mistake on his part. I would like to see us resolve that eventually. But I do think it reflects the way that we as a Chamber can work and the way a constructive majority can work. So I applaud the leadership of the majority in getting us to this point and through some very difficult issues. We are going to have some good things coming up, and I look forward to further engaging in debate on those.

FIRES IN ALASKA

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I want to mention very quickly what is on the front page of my newspapers in the State of Alaska this week and has been for a couple of weeks now. Our fire season started very early and with an intensity that has really attracted concern not only within the State but outside the State. Currently, we have about 545 fires that have begun within the State, both in the interior, where we traditionally see them, but also down in Southcentral, fires that have taken homes and properties.

In the first part of the fire season, there was a great deal of attention on the community of Willow, an area that hosts the homes of many of our famous and our infamous dog mushers, mushers who mush along the Iditarod Trail and other parts. The articles have been about the dislocation of not only the mushers who have lost their homes but also trying to find places for up to 600 sled dogs for temporary relocation.

So there has been a great deal of concern about the fire status in Alaska. As I mentioned, 545 fires have burned, 427,881 acres as of yesterday evening. That is a significant total. It is a very significant total, but it is pretty small in comparison to where we were in 2004 when we saw almost 5 million acres burn. In 2004, 4.7 million acres burned, and in 2005, we had 2.2 million acres.

We are hopeful that the weather is going to change and that we will get on top of this. But when I was home in Fairbanks in the interior on Saturday, on Saturday alone we saw 6,500 lightning strikes at a time and a place where it is very dry in the interior and has been for some time. So fire danger is very real.

My point this morning is not to give the weather report but to acknowledge publicly the efforts of the men and women who have been engaged so bravely and so heroically in fighting these wildland fires, fighting these fires all over the State in extreme conditions, in difficult conditions where wind can come in at the last minute and change the direction of the fires and not only threaten the property but the safety of our firefighters.

Right now, we have about 3,300 fire personnel in the State of Alaska. About 2,200 of them are fighting fires on the ground. Over 1,000 of these are men and women from Alaska. Many of them are hotshots and are firefighters from the villages who have a great deal of expertise, but we also rely on many who come from the lower 48 to assist us during this time of our wildfires. We thank them and we pray for their safety and for those who have been left homeless, whose property has been damaged, whose lives have been upended by these very difficult fires. Know that our hearts go out to you, and whatever efforts we are able to provide for assistance, we stand ready to do so. And a very heartfelt thank-you to those who are fighting these fires.

EPA RULE ON WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I came to the floor today to speak about an issue—a regulation that has raised a level of concern and controversy in my State of Alaska like no other we have seen in a long time, and this is in regard to the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers and their release of a final version of a rule that significantly increases the ability of these agencies to regulate more of our land and our water. I am speaking specifically to the rule that expands the definition of ''waters of the United States'' under the Clean Water Act.

Coming from the State of Nebraska, an agriculture State, I am sure the Presiding Officer has heard concerns from constituents and farmers about the expansion of this definition and what it may mean to our economies.

The EPA claims this rule—and we lovingly refer to it as WOTUS—is a clarification to provide certainty and predictability as to where clean air permits are required. But the view of so many Alaskans—and really the view around the country—is that this rule is far beyond a simple clarification because it substantially increases EPA's regulatory reach. It will subject countless new projects to permitting requirements that will be difficult to satisfy, increasing cost and certainly increasing project delays.

The application of the WOTUS in Alaska is expansive and it is negative. It is something I have described as a showstopper in the past, and none of the changes in the final rule alter that

description. If anything, they just serve to reinforce it. The rule really was a showstopper when it was drafted, and it remains at least as bad and damaging today.

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, there are more than 174 million acres in Alaska that are wetlands. There are 174 million acres in the State that are considered wetlands, so compare this: The entire State of Texas is 172 million acres. Everyone in the lower 48 thinks Texas is a pretty big State. My friend JOHN CORNYN was here earlier. Texas has 172 million acres. In Alaska, we have 174 million acres of wetlands. So take the whole State of Texas and turn it into wetlands, and that is what we are looking at in Alaska.

Look at this map for a little bit of context. Under the old rule, 43.3 percent of Alaska's surface is considered wetlands compared to about 5.2 percent of the surface area in the lower 48. This map is pulled from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's wetlands finder Web site. It may be difficult to see, but these areas in the brighter green are all the wetlands. The area of southeastern Alaska, where I was born and raised, is entirely wetlands. The entire southeastern part of the State is wetlands—in Fairbanks, in the interior area, Southcentral, all around Prince William Sound, all the southwest.

But I think it is important to note that this Web site which Fish and Wildlife has is lacking data for a significant part of Alaska, and so the map is effectively incomplete. The last study conducted by the Service on the status of wetlands in the State was done back in 1994, which really puts it out of date. It doesn't take into account the recent Supreme Court decisions of Rapanos and SWANCC. So we have another map here that I think is instructive to look at as well.

This map is pulled from a study by the University of Michigan and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology. In this map, they use L-band radar satellite imagery. It probably produces a more complete and accurate view of the wetlands in the State. Again, we see all of these areas that are considered wetlands, but, in effect, more parts of the State are considered wetlands or viewed as wetlands than not.

So what we have between these two maps—between what Fish and Wildlife has done and what the University of Michigan and the California Institute of Technology has done—are some discrepancies, but it illustrates the problem. The problem is that nobody really knows what will be considered wetlands by the EPA and by the Corps, and if the new rule takes effect, that problem will only be compounded because it declares that any water or wetland within 4,000 feet of a ''categorically jurisdictional water'' will now be subject to this ''significant nexus'' analysis. That analysis will include the entire water at issue even if only a tiny part of that lies within the 4,000-foot boundary.

If you are like most Americans, you probably and understandably have no idea how to define a categorically jurisdictional water. You probably don't have any interest in learning how to define it. But what you may soon find is that it is going to impact you because it will include all waters used or susceptible to use in interstate commerce, all interstate waters, the territorial seas, all tributaries to those bodies of waters, and all waters adjacent to all those other enumerated waters. That is a lot of water.

Again, you probably and understandably aren't familiar with this significant nexus analysis, either. I mean, really, what does that mean? Here is a way to help put it into context. If you have a 500-acre plot of land and within that 500 acres you have 10 square feet that are within 4,000 feet of any jurisdictional water, your entire parcel—the whole 500-acre plot—will now be evaluated as a whole. Even though the area we are talking about where there are wetlands is like 10 square feet out of 500 acres, the whole thing is considered as a whole. The significant nexus analysis must include all similarly situated waters. So, again, you will have a situation where EPA and the Corps are going to interpret broadly.

What does all this mean in terms of application? It is interesting, looking at maps and having this discussion about categorically jurisdictional waters and significant nexus, but let's take a specific example.

Take the community of Fairbanks, where I spent a lot of time growing up. Fairbanks is in a valley, it is in the Tanana Valley surrounded by a pretty large watershed. The Tanana River, Chena River, we have a situation in this area in Fairbanks where all of the wetlands in the basin have been declared similarly situated. What that means is that a landowner will be forced to prove that none of the wetlands in the basin, as a whole, have a significant physical, chemical or biological connection to either the Tanana or the Chena Rivers. That is practically an impossible hurdle. There are thousands of acres of wetlands in that basin that are now all effectively subject to jurisdiction under this new rule. Every single person who wants to do any sort of development in Alaska's second-largest city will now be required to get some form of a permit. This includes the guy who wants to build a cabin up on Chena Ridge or the small dredge operator out in the Goldstream Valley or the developer out in North Pole who wants to put in a new subdivision. To all of them: Go out and get your permit.

The bureaucratic mess that is the 404 permitting process has already held back crucial development within the State, and this new rule is only going to make things worse. Now, I wish to go further to the Fairbanks example and to tell the story of Richard Schok. He has a company called Flowline. He has been engaged in an ongoing battle with the Corps since May 21, 2008. That was the day Richard submitted a permit application to the Corps. It was a reapplication for a permit which had been granted back in 2003. We might think, OK, this is just a reapplication. This is a permit which has been in place now for 5 years. It should have been an easy matter. Instead, Richard is still fighting the Corps—this many years after, still fighting the Corps for a new permit. Since 2008, the Corps has connected the piece of property at issue to the Tanana River, the Chena River, and something known as Channel B, which is a manmade waterway used for flood control purposes.

The Agency's first attempt to establish jurisdiction over his private land, which consists of 455 acres outside of Fairbanks, was through the Tanana River. They looked at it, and after administrative review, it was held there was no connection between the subject land and the Tanana. So we would have thought we were done with it. But, no, rather than just allow Mr. Schok to develop his private land, the Corps then switched theories on him and said: No, we think the land is connected to the Chena River instead. But then they went further than that. They settled on a third theory, and that was that the wetlands had a direct connection to Channel B. Channel B is over 2 miles away from Mr. Schok's property via a small 20- to 50-foot-wide wetland arm, since Channel B drains into the Chena River. So when you are talking about a significant nexus, how remote could you possibly be.

So there are a couple problems with this analysis. First, the strip of land they labeled as wetlands wasn't wetlands at all. People drive four-wheelers on it. You can walk on it in tennis shoes. Basically, this is the land they are describing as wetlands. The guy has taken a core sample here. It is muddy underneath, but effectively this is what is being considered the wetlands. Second, Channel B contributes less than 1 percent of the total flow to the Chena River. We would think that should not suffice for a finding of a significant nexus, but the Corps thinks it does. So to date, this permitting battle has cost Mr. Schok over $200,000, and that doesn't count the 1,000 man-hours he and his staff have put into the project. All he is trying to do is move his business from its current location, which is limited in size, to this new piece of land—his private property—and open a new powder coating plant. The move would allow him to expand his operations, employ more people, and contribute to the growth of Alaska. But since 2008, he can't make it happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to continue for an additional 4 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I also wish to speak to how the rule impacts the development of hydropower in the State of Alaska. We are looking to find energy solutions, clean energy solutions. Hydropower is huge for us. Alaska has nearly 300 prime locations for hydrodevelopment, nearly 200 in Southeast Alaska alone, but many of them require the construction of powerhouses or transmission lines that may rest on wetlands or cross wetlands as defined by the new rule—and that is a big problem.

A good example of this is Crater Lake, a fishing community of Cordova, down in Prince William Sound. Crater Lake is at an elevation of 1,600 feet, straight up from the ocean. Cordova has been looking at this small hydro opportunity to advance their energy solutions. It is clean. It is renewable. It is carbon free. There are no fish issues. So this is perfect for them. Prior to WOTUS, it was anticipated that it would be about a 12- to 18-month process to permit this small hydroproject. What the Federal nexus WOTUS brings, this project is now likely to end up in the FERC process, and what was expected to be about $150,000 to $200,000 in permitting costs is now looking to be closer to $1 million and take potentially 3 to 5 years. Think about it. For a small community like Cordova that is trying to find small energy solutions for this fishing community, these additional costs are likely going to kill this small project. And what happens? The community continues providing their power by diesel, when we have a clean opportunity, but that opportunity is going to be suffocated by this rule.

Most of coastal Alaska, with its rugged mountains filled with rivulets and waters, will be subject to these case-by-case determinations. Simply performing the science and providing justification to the EPA for these adjacent water determinations will add cost to projects and likely delay any development as the determinations are litigated.

If any projects do make it to the finish line, their higher costs under this rule will mean their electricity is ultimately less affordable for Alaskans. The costs we face when developing in Alaska are already steep enough. They will be magnified and worsened by the final WOTUS rule. I am grateful to our colleagues on the EPW Committee, who recently reported out bipartisan legislation, which I cosponsored, which requires the agencies to develop a better rule.

These two bills will help provide relief to local governments. The Infrastructure Rehabilitation Act will allow the Secretary of the Army to waive the notice and comment period required by the Clean Water Act when a natural disaster has damaged critical infrastructure and a local government needs to rebuild.

We also have the Mitigation Facilitation Act, which will allow the Secretary to provide loans to local governments in order to ease the burden created by 404 permits and the overreaching scope of the new WOTUS rule. If the Federal Government is going to require hugely burdensome and expensive mitigation projects, effectively an unfunded mandate, the government should assist municipalities by providing loans and loan guarantees to small local entities. So I have introduced these two bills and am looking forward to having them move forward, in addition to what the EPW Committee has done.

Alaska will be the State most heavily impacted just because of the nature of our wetlands. An analyst done by EPA and the Corps suggests that at the high end, the mitigation costs to Alaska could be $55,000 per acre—$55,000 an acre. With 43 percent of our land requiring mitigation for any sort of development, these costs will halt many development projects. And when combined with the cost of even getting a permit, which averages about $270,000, economic development will be seemingly impossible in many parts of the State.

But it goes further than that because EPA can also issue civil penalties for violations of a permit or for failing to have a permit when it thinks you should have one. These penalties can be assessed at a rate of up to $37,500 per day and doubled if the person being fined has been issued an administrative compliance order and EPA decides there has been a violation of that order. The threat of these penalties is another cost that people have to take into account when they are developing property.

There are so many places in Alaska that are more than 4,000 feet away from some kind of water. We are close to water. We are close to water everywhere. We have too many rivers, too many lakes, too many wetlands. We love them all. But we are the only State that has permafrost, and we have no idea at this point in time whether or not, and under what circumstances, these areas might be regulated. We have incredible uncertainty working against.

The bottom line is that the new WOTUS rule will have results that in many cases will just be absurd in Alaska and add significant, significant costs. For us, this rule is the equivalent of the Roadless Rule that killed off logging in the Tongass National Forest, ending hundreds of jobs.

I know this is an issue that many of us in this body care about, many of us in this country care about. It speaks to what we see when we have agencies that go beyond their jurisdictional authority, that go beyond the scope of the laws that were passed with good intentions. I want us to get back to that place of laws that allow us to have clean air, clean water. But when we see interpretations like we have with this, it is time to stop them.

Madam President, I thank my colleague for the indulgence of some additional time.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I rise as negotiations between the P5+1 nations and Iran enter their final phase. The President deserves our thanks for his commitment to eliminating the nuclear threat we face from Iran, and we owe the negotiating team our gratitude for their tireless and ongoing work to achieve a meaningful deal.

For decades, Iran has posed a serious, real, and ongoing threat to the U.S. national security interests. Iran's pursuit of its hegemonic ambitions in the Middle East has manifested in the training and arming of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces and terrorist organizations such as Hezbollah. More recently, Iran's increased intervention in the conflicts in Yemen and Iraq pose dangerous and unpredictable regional consequences. Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei continues his horrific and unacceptable calls for the destruction of the State of Israel and has not yet come clean about the dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

The stakes of these nuclear negotiations clearly could not be higher. Nothing less than the peace and security of the Middle East hangs in the balance.

The Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, the hard-fought legislation crafted by Senators BOB CORKER, BEN CARDIN, and New Jersey's own Senator MENENDEZ—of which I am a cosponsor—sets up a clear and constructive process for Congress to weigh in on any final deal that touches upon the statutory sanctions Congress has enacted.

With just days remaining before a final deadline, Congress must continue to voice its concerns and exercise its oversight authority. To me, this role is at the bedrock of our role, and Congress must play its role. As my senior Senator, Senator MENENDEZ, has stated: If the interim period is just a short-term pause that preserves for Iran the ability to quickly restart its nuclear program, we will have failed the American people, and we will have our allies and friends to whom we have vowed to protect from Iranian aggressions.

Any final agreement must build in the ability to hold Iran to its commitments and to prevent the absolute nightmare of a nuclear Iran from being realized.

My intent today is to ensure that the administration, which has worked tirelessly to prevent Iran from gaining access to a nuclear weapon, has the best possible chance of success once the final agreement reaches Congress. The framework agreement released on April 2, 2015, leaves gaps, some of which I would like to spend a few moments highlighting today.

First, a robust and comprehensive inspections and verification regime must be the foundation of any deal that is

reached. With Iran's known enrichment facilities at Natanz and Fordow, as well as a heavy water reactor at Arak, under international oversight, the country's leaders would almost certainly look elsewhere to conduct any secret nuclear work.

Iran, of course, denies any desire to build a bomb, but distrust of Iran is based on deep historical precedence. Iran secretly built and operated Natanz and Fordow, and they still haven't come clean about their past military nuclear activities at Parchin. Therefore, ensuring a robust inspections regime is critical for my support of a final deal.

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action—JCPOA—fact sheet released on April 2 stated that Iran will be required to grant access to the IAEA to investigate suspicious sites or allegations of covert facilities anywhere in the country.

It was hoped that rapid inspections would underwrite the verifiability of the agreement, so if Iran were suspected of violating the agreement, the IAEA would have access to those suspected sites.

According to the latest reports, the IAEA would have the ability to investigate undeclared sites; however, Iran would still be able to dispute those requests in an international forum made up of five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council—the United States, Britain, France, Russia, and China—plus Germany, the EU, and Iran. As we look forward to examining the contours of an inspection regime, we must be wary of any proposal that allows Iran to jam up the IAEA and the dispute resolution process, while removing any evidence of violations that are occurring.

Our negotiators should expect questions from this Chamber: Are there clear loopholes for cheating? Does the administration have high confidence that Iran is not making bomb material at its declared nuclear facilities and that the inspectors are able to detect clandestine facilities?

Our standard will be an arrangement that prevents Iran from dodging or hiding from an inspections regime. Our intelligence, together with enhanced inspections, must be able to ensure that the United States will catch Iran if it takes the risk of pursuing a secret pathway to nuclear weapons and pursuing secret nuclear activities.

Let's not forget that Iran has a dismal record of compliance with its international obligations. Iran has a 30-year record of cheating on the nonproliferation treaty—30 years of cheating. Iran has a 30-year record of cheating, but already the Ayatollah stated that Iran will not allow inspections at military sites today. Khamenei is already backtracking on major commitments agreed to by negotiators on all sides.

This is a serious issue, and in my opinion, it is a clear ploy by Iran to frustrate the negotiations and move the goalpost on these negotiations. Even more so, understanding the history, this reinforces how much we don't know about the military dimension of Iran's past activities. We have no baseline for monitoring Iran moving forward without an understanding of what has been sought in the past.

This is not new. The IAEA has raised these concerns. The April 2 JCPOA says: ''Iran will implement an agreed set of measures to address the IAEA's concerns regarding the past military dimensions of its program.''

Secretary Kerry stated in April that past military dimensions ''will be part of a final agreement. If there's going to be a deal, it will be done.'' I applaud the Secretary's commitment to ensuring that the Iranians' past behavior will play a clear role in the ongoing negotiations.

We know that in this Chamber, my colleagues will examine this closely. We will also examine timelines. In the best-case scenario, for 10 to 15 years, Iran will limit its research and development, limit its domestic enrichment capacity, will not build new enrichment facilities or heavy water reactors, will limit its stockpile of enriched uranium, and will accept enhanced transparency measures. After 15 years, when it is allowed under the terms of the agreement to build its stockpile, it will only be able to do so for peaceful purposes.

But I believe we have to be clear-eyed about the other scenario, which is that after 10 to 15 years—a blip in time for a regime that has been under sanctions for decades—Iran ramps up its research and development efforts on advanced centrifuges, installs these centrifuges, and decides to break out.

Would this deal enhance the intelligence picture of Iran's nuclear capability? That is an important question. If so, would it adequately inform our military options should Iran attempt that breakout?

Are there assumptions being made that in the short term Iran may undergo internal political changes that will make them more favorable to the West? Are we assuming that in making this deal? Relying on such assumptions would be a dangerous gamble. There are no assurances about what the future state of their regime will be.

Finally, Congress must be clear that this deal must not only be credible to Congress, but it must also satisfy Iran's neighbors that have much to gain from an Iran that follows established international norms and far too much to lose if we allow a deal that leaves Iran's neighbors vulnerable to reckless rhetoric and aggression. If other countries believe we have wavered in our resolve to get the strongest possible deal, it will be very difficult to discourage other countries from developing or pursuing a weapon. This could lead to proliferation, and such proliferation would be catastrophic. It would be a catastrophic blow to an already unstable and unpredictable region. This is not an abstract concern; Iran's neighbors are watching these negotiations carefully.

While I sincerely hope that in 50 years future Senators will discuss how the United States did what no other nation was able to do—build a comprehensive sanctions regime that brought Iran to the negotiating table, neutralized the threat of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and succeeded in putting an end to dangerous calls for the destruction of Israel—success is not certain. Success is not an inevitability.

I will not judge this deal before I see a final agreement. I encourage my colleagues to read the final text, as I am sure they will, before making judgments about the deal. We need to see what is in it.

Under the Joint Plan of Action, we have seen unprecedented inspections of Iran's nuclear infrastructure take hold. Iran's enriched stockpile has shrunk. There are limitations on their enrichment processes. Enrichment has been confined to one facility. This is progress. It is my hope that the negotiators are building upon this progress and working toward a comprehensive final deal. There is much at stake. The bar is set high—as it should be—for a deal, and the questions I have raised are among the many that will be asked and that must be asked as we examine a final deal in the coming weeks.

THANKING SENATE PAGES

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, if I may take one more moment, today, as I understand, or tomorrow is the last day for this group of pages to be here with us.

I have been in this Senate now a little bit longer than this group of pages—about 20 months now. We see these groups of pages, and it is extraordinary to see young people come from all over America. Some of them may go on to government, but most of them will go on to do other things. We see them come into this Chamber and continue a tradition that has been going on for decades. They come and they go. But I want everyone to know that they really do enrich our experience here as Senators, and they help the staff do invaluable work for the operations of the Senate. They may be viewed as the lowest on the totem pole in this institution, but their value and the legacy they are continuing is a noble one.

Today, on the penultimate day of this group of pages, I wish to offer them my gratitude for their service to our country.

Thank you.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, today's decision in King v. Burwell is judicial activism, plain and simple. For the second time in just a few years, a handful of unelected judges has rewritten the text of ObamaCare in order to impose that failed law upon millions of Americans. The first time, the Court ignored Federal law and magically transformed a statutory ''penalty'' into a ''tax.'' Today, these robed Houdinis have transmogrified a ''Federal exchange'' into an exchange ''established by the State.'' This is lawless.

As Justice Scalia rightfully put it, ''Words no longer have meaning if an exchange that is not established by a State is 'established by the State.' '' Justice Scalia continues: ''We should start calling this law SCOTUScare.'' I agree.

If this were a bankruptcy case or any other case of ordinary statutory interpretation, the results would have been 9 to 0, with the Court unanimously reversing the Obama administration's illegal actions. But instead, politics intervened. For nakedly political reasons, the Supreme Court willfully ignored the words that Congress wrote, and instead read into the law their preferred policy outcome. These Justices have joined with President Obama in harming millions of Americans. Unelected judges have once again become legislators—and bad ones at that. They are lawless, and they hide their prevarication in legalese. Our government was designed to be one of laws, not of men, and this transparent distortion is disgraceful.

These Justices are not behaving as umpires calling balls and strikes. They have joined a team, and it is a team that is hurting Americans across this country. ObamaCare is the biggest job killer in America. Millions of Americans have lost their jobs, have been forced into part-time work, have lost their health insurance, have lost their doctors. Millions of Americans have seen their health insurance premiums skyrocket, and it is a direct result of President Obama, of Democrats in the Congress, and of lawless Justices at the U.S. Supreme Court who have joined the team of the Obama administration. If those Justices want to become legislators, I invite them to resign and run for office. That is the appropriate place to write laws—on this floor, not from that courtroom.

I began my career as a law clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court, clerking for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, one of the greatest Chief Justices ever to serve our Nation. I have spent the majority of my adult life litigating before the U.S. Supreme Court, both on behalf of the State of Texas and on behalf of private parties. What this Court has become is heartbreaking. If Chief Justice Rehnquist could see this Court today, he would be filled with sorrow at what has become of the Supreme Court of the United States.

The obligation of fidelity to the Constitution and fidelity to law matters. We are not living in a platonic oligarchy with philosopher kings governing us who believe they get to write the laws, interpret the laws, and enforce the laws. That is not the American system of governance.

At the same time, crocodile tears are flowing here in our Nation's Capital over the Supreme Court's decision to illegally rewrite ObamaCare, which has been a disaster since its inception. But one day of faux outrage from the Washington cartel won't fool the millions of courageous conservatives all across our country. They know that far too many career politicians—Democrats and Republicans—in this Nation's Capital are quietly celebrating the Court's decision. If they believe this issue is now settled so they don't have to address it, they are sorely mistaken.

I have made repeal of this disastrous law a top priority since the very first day I entered into this body, and I have made its repeal central to my tenure in office. Republicans all across the country, including my friend the Presiding Officer, campaigned on repealing this law and were elected in a historic tidal wave year—historic majorities in both Chambers of this Congress and in statehouses all across the country. It is now up to us to keep our promises.

I believe 2016 will be a national referendum on repealing ObamaCare. This law is profoundly unpopular. It is unpopular with Republicans, it is unpopular with Independents, it is unpopular with Democrats, it is unpopular with young people, it is unpopular with Hispanics, and it is unpopular with everybody it has hurt, and there are millions being hurt by this law.

The Court adopted and put its stamp of approval on the IRS's blatantly unlawful reading of the statute to make subsidies and taxes applicable to individuals on Federal exchanges when Congress explicitly provided the opposite. Jonathan Gruber famously said Obamacare was built on exploiting the stupidity of the American people. Well, unfortunately the Supreme Court is now complicit in that deception. The Supreme Court has joined President Obama, whose statement ''if you like your health insurance plan, you can keep your health insurance plan'' was rightfully noted as the lie of the year as millions of Americans lost their doctors. Now those rogue Justices are complicit in that lie, in setting aside their oath of office to lie to the American people.

After today's ruling, ObamaCare will now be responsible for imposing illegal taxes on more than 11 million individuals and for burdening hundreds of thousands of businesses with illegal penalties on their workers, killing jobs and further slowing economic growth.

You are a young person right now. You come out of school. You have student loans up to your eyeballs. You are struggling. You don't know if you are going to get a job. The dismal Obama economy means your future is bleak. You have no hope or optimism of actually getting a career, getting skills, moving towards the American dream. Well, today the U.S. Supreme Court has joined arm in arm with President Obama and the IRS in illegally imposing taxes on you—you, that young person starting your career, struggling to make your student loan payments.

Working as a part-time employee making coffee doesn't pay those payments, and yet you are stuck with the individual mandate, which is a tax, so says the Supreme Court and so the Obama Justice Department argued. Right after President Obama told the American people it wasn't a tax, the Obama Justice Department said yes, it is a tax. The Supreme Court agreed. You, the single person, the single mom trying to feed your kids, are paying an illegal tax because of the lies emanating from Washington, DC.

You, the teenage immigrant, as my father was 58 years ago, washing dishes, making 50 cents an hour—he couldn't speak English, but he was filled with hopes and dreams. He was filled with an aspiration for the American dream. Ours is the greatest Nation in the history of the world because people can start with nothing and achieve anything. That is the promise of America.

ObamaCare is strangling that promise. You, the teen, are paying illegal taxes right now today because of President Obama's deception, because of the IRS's lawlessness, and because of the Supreme Court's judicial activism, violating their oaths of office.

I remain fully committed to repealing every single word of ObamaCare. Mark my words. Following the election in 2016, the referendum that we will have, in 2017, this Chamber will return and we will repeal every word of ObamaCare. We will bring back economic growth, we will bring back opportunity, and then we will pass commonsense health reform that makes health insurance personal, portable, and affordable and that keeps government from getting between us and our doctors.

We will recognize that this horrible experiment has failed. When millions of Americans lose their jobs, are forced into part-time jobs, lose their health care, lose their doctors, when millions of Americans see their premiums skyrocket, it is incumbent on Members of this body, it is incumbent on the Federal Government to fix the wreckage they caused, to fix the wreckage the Supreme Court has now embraced lawlessly.

We will repeal ObamaCare, and I will fight with every breath in my body to make sure that happens in 2017.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first I have to say that clearly there are two Americas on how we view health care, that is for sure, after hearing my colleague speak about the ''disaster'' of providing tens of millions of people health insurance, affordable health insurance.

Where I live in Michigan, it is great that families no longer have to put the kids to bed and then say a little prayer: Dear God, don't let the kids get sick. For millions of Americans, the Supreme Court decision has reaffirmed the fact that they will have that peace of mind.

When Chief Justice Roberts, writing for the majority today, said ''Congress passed the Affordable Care Act to improve health insurance markets, not destroy them,'' I think he was absolutely right. I commend him and the majority—substantial majority—for understanding that in the competitive, private marketplace that we set up through insurance exchanges, we meant for all Americans to have the opportunity for the tax cuts that allow them to be able to purchase insurance, most people purchasing insurance for under $100 a month, which, contrary to destroying America, I think is making incredible differences in people's lives and creating the opportunity going forward for a competitive marketplace for small business.

Certainly now, I hope from here that we will go forward and stop all of the repeal discussions and get down to the business of improving health care because I think there are still things we need to do. We need to look at how things are working and make sure things are going as well as possible, particularly with small businesses, and I feel we have some work to do. But it would be nice if we could get beyond the unfortunate commentary that has gone on for too long that somehow providing affordable health insurance for Americans is going to be the end of our country.

I certainly think that on something like health care, where nobody controls whether they get sick or mom and dad get sick or the kids get sick or their friends get sick—we are in a situation where our job is to figure out the best way to support people taking responsibility to purchase insurance and make sure that it is affordable, high quality, and low cost. And that is something which we—in the greatest country in the world, with all of the innovators, all of the smart people we have, the wonderful doctors, the wonderful hospital facilities we have, certainly we can do that.

That is, in fact, what is happening through health reform. Right now, 16.4 million Americans who were without insurance before the Affordable Care Act now have the confidence and security of knowing they have health care coverage. Now, 6.4 million Americans, because of the Supreme Court decision, will be able to keep the tax credit. They are not going to see their taxes go up. They are going to be able to keep the tax credits that are going to allow them to make sure that insurance is affordable. That includes over 228,000 people in my home State of Michigan. That is a lot of people.

What is also so incredibly important is that of those people who already have insurance—the majority of Americans—they are having better opportunities to keep it, not be blocked, not be dropped, not have caps.

Some 129 million Americans have preexisting conditions, whether it is diabetes, juvenile diabetes, cancer. Colleagues here have been in situations of announcing various kinds of cancer, diseases, and so on. Some 129 million Americans—including 17 million children—no longer have a risk of being denied coverage because of the insurance company being able to stop them if they have a preexisting condition.

''BEAT THE PRESS'' SOFTBALL GAME

I was with a wonderful group of women from Congress—if I can just divert from that serious moment to say that last night we raised money for breast cancer survivors in a wonderful game between the press and the women Members of Congress. Despite both teams doing a great job—I was very impressed with both sides, but the great news is that the Congresswomen won. We called it ''beat the press.'' It was great. But what was most important last night was seeing all the breast cancer survivors who were there, women who had been able to get that checkup, been able to get that treatment, knowing that going forward, wherever they work—if they move from one job to another, if they change insurance, they are still going to be able to get the coverage they need. They are going to be able to get that mammogram with no copay as preventive health care. They are going to be able to get the care they need. If they need treatment, they are not going to arbitrarily have an insurance company come in and say ''We don't really care what your doctor says about how many sessions you need or radiation treatments. You get 10 and that is it'' or ''You get 5 and that is it'' or whatever the number is.

Mr. President, 129 million Americans with preexisting conditions today can breathe a sigh of relief because they are going to be able to continue to have the health insurance they need. Some 105 million Americans no longer have a lifetime cap on coverage, including mental health and substance abuse coverage, which is so very significant, and 76 million Americans with private coverage are eligible for expanded preventive services, such as mammograms and prostate screening.

We all wish our wonderful friend and colleague Senator KING all the best as he gets his treatments next week. We know he will come back strong, as well as all of our colleagues who have been in similar situations.

This is a big deal. This really is about saving lives. That is what this is all about. It is not a political game. It is not just going back and forth between Republicans and Democrats. This is health. This is medical care. If you get that horrible diagnosis—you are sitting in a doctor's office, and you are told you have cancer or a heart condition or any number of other things—you are going to be able to get medical care.

We also know that consumers have saved $9 billion since 2011 because the law requires insurance companies to spend at least 80 cents on every dollar we give them on medical care. That was not always the case. You can get a rebate if they don't.

So I hope that at this moment in time, we will stop the efforts to repeal health reform. I know it is in the budget that passed. The Republican budget—House and Senate—sets up a process to be able to go back and one more time try to repeal health insurance for tens of millions of Americans. I hope we will not do that. I hope the other side will not do that. We certainly will not do that. I hope that, instead, we will get about the business of making sure it works as well as possible and that we are strengthening the quality measures, the opportunities for competition, and continuing to bring rates down.

We know that if health reform is repealed, it will increase deficits by hundreds of billions of dollars and cause 19 million Americans to lose their health insurance just next year, according to the budget office—19 million people—and 24 million people in the next few years. The Congressional Budget Office says that a repeal would result in a $353 billion increase in the budget.

I congratulate the Supreme Court for common sense today and for understanding what we meant, what legislative intent was all about, and urge that we now decide we are going to work together on health care moving forward.

HIGHWAY BILL

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I have one more topic I would like to speak about today, and that is the fact that we have a looming deadline. In 36 days, the highway trust fund is going to be at zero—empty. In 36 days as of today, if we do not act together, there will be a shutdown of the highway trust fund, which will have a ripple effect through the entire economy and harm businesses and workers and families in every single one of our States coast to coast. The harm will be felt equally—Republicans, Democrats, Independents, people who don't participate in the political process, people who do. Everybody will suffer if we cannot come together and address the highway trust fund. If this happens, Congress fails in its responsibility.

With all due respect, I have to say that it falls right on the majority because we have been saying and will

continue to say that we want to work together on a bipartisan basis to get this done.

There was a time when it was not a partisan issue, when Republicans were leaders on building our infrastructure. In fact, President Eisenhower said in 1952: ''A network of modern roads is as necessary to our national defense as it is to our national economy and our personal safety.''

What is interesting is that tomorrow is the day when it is 59 years—tomorrow, 59 years ago, Congress approved the Federal Highway Act, connecting all of our country for commerce, for farmers, for families. The rollcall, interestingly, was almost unanimous. Only one Senator voted no. Everybody else voted yes. Ninety-nine voted yes. Then it passed in the House on a voice vote.

Think about all the discussions we are having today. The Federal Highway Act passed on a voice vote in the House. Only one person in the Senate voted no. It was signed by President Eisenhower 3 days later. It was the biggest public works project in our Nation's history. It could not have happened if not for a triumph of bipartisanship. A Republican President working with a Democratic Congress got this done.

When we look at who benefited from taking that dirt road, paving it, and being able to go across our country, it certainly was colleagues in the West, colleagues in the South. It wasn't just the cities. In fact, they probably had roads already. It was everybody else, as we moved across the country. So this should not be regional. It should not be partisan. It doesn't make any sense for us not to come together and get this done.

Behind the teamwork at the time, after they worked together to pass this, construction began on a system of 40,000 miles of highways, enough to circle the globe 1½ times. That is what was done when people worked together to build the strong infrastructure of the 20th century.

It didn't take long before the economic impact was felt. By the late 1950s, our interstate highways were responsible for 31 percent of the annual growth of the economy. Over 30 percent of the growth in the economy came from that one act, developing the infrastructure to move goods and services and people across our country.

The people of this country were getting to their destinations faster, more safely than ever before. Every rural community was flourishing just as our urban communities had been.

Thanks to President Eisenhower's leadership and a Democratic-controlled Congress, our roads in the mid-21st century were the envy of the world. Other nations noticed. Those nations aspired to be like us, to be like America in a global economy.

They now are making huge investments in their infrastructure, from China, at 9 percent of their GDP—four times more than we are—to Brazil.

I have said before that when I was in China a couple of years ago, they rolled out 20 new international airports—20 international airports. That didn't count anything else they were doing.

In Brazil they rolled out for us—when I was there with the Secretary of Agriculture—their new rail system and road system that was going to get agricultural commodities to the ports and move people around their country so they could move forward as a global, economic power.

Today our European competitors spend twice as much as we do, and now it is time for America to step forward because, unfortunately, we are now playing catchup. The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report for 2014 and 2015 ranks America 16th in the world in the quality of our roads. America is one spot behind Luxembourg and just one spot ahead of Croatia, as I said before. Yay, we are beating Croatia. It is an embarrassment, and it is not what our people need or our businesses need or what our farmers need or what our workers need.

In 2002, that same report had us at No. 5—the fifth best transportation system. Now we are 16th, and the American Society of Civil Engineers has given America a D. And how many of us would be satisfied if our children came home from school with a D? I know I wouldn't be.

It also said that 32 percent of America's major roads are in poor or mediocre condition. We know what has happened when bridges have fallen. We know what happens. I have seen it in Michigan and heard the stories of people driving under overpasses and cement falls down on the car. People's lives are threatened. People's lives have been taken.

Driving on bad roads costs motorists $109 billion in road repairs a year. I talked to one colleague who told me that he had to replace all four tires on his car when he went through one pothole not long ago, and that in the last year he had bought seven new tires for his car, which is way more than he would have been paying if we had created a way to fund our roads on a long-term basis that made sense.

It is not right for Congress to neglect our responsibility to maintain and, in fact, strengthen our infrastructure. In fact, we, as individuals and business people driving on roads, driving across bridges, and moving across our country, are paying for the fact that we have not come together with a long-term plan. We cannot expect our workers and companies to compete in the 21st century global marketplace if we are forced to use 20th century roads and bridges.

So I would say, in conclusion, that we have 36 days left to act. Now, when we want to, we can act pretty quickly.

I commend colleagues from the EPW Committee who have come forward with a 6-year bill. We have in front of us a policy passed by the committee.

I congratulate Senator INHOFE and Senator BOXER for coming forward with a proposal that will increase the funding over time, and I believe and hope we will do it in an even more robust way. They put forth policies that will, in the long term, create the economic stability for our businesses and the jobs for our workers and our families that they need. The DRIVE Act, as we call it, is an important step forward. I commend the chairman of the Finance Committee for holding hearings on how we finance that, because that is our responsibility.

I say, again, we have enough time to get this done because President Eisenhower, over 50 years ago tomorrow, with a Democratic Congress, got it done. Thirty-six days is enough time for us to meet the expectations of the American people on this issue.

Thank you.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I have been interested in how the Democrats are constantly pushing to get moneys for the Federal highway system. All of us are. Every one of us in this body wants to do everything we can for the highway system. However, they are talking in such big terms that the only way you could possibly reach those kinds of moneys would be with further tax increases.

Now, my experience here is that when our friends on the other side call for tax increases, it is so they can spend. Frankly, I would tell you, if we raised the amount of money they are asking for in tax increases, I could tell you all of the projects that are going to be done, and many of them are not the crucial projects in this country.

All I can say is that we are going to try to find the moneys, but we don't want to raise taxes, and we certainly don't want to raise the gas tax at this time. We will find enough moneys to do, hopefully, a multiyear approach toward the highway plan. I am dedicated to try to find that way.

The other committee, the Environment and Public Works Committee, is, I believe, the committee that has passed a bill calling for a 6-year highway program. I hope that it would meet my highest goal, if we could do that, but I don't think we would be able to do that under the current monetary and economic systems that we have today.

But, nevertheless, I am going to do my best to try to help to get the highway bill through and to do it the right way.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator HATCH be recognized following my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ALAN LEVIN

Mr. COONS. Mr. President, today I wish to honor someone I have had the

privilege of calling a friend for many years and who is retiring after serving the State of Delaware for the past 6 years, Alan Levin. Alan and I both had our first tours of duty in Washington working for the same Republican Senator. I was an intern for Senator William Roth in the early 1980s and Alan was his counsel in the mid-1980s. Alan, a well-known and respected statewide leader in Delaware's Republican Party, has, since 2009, served as the director of the Delaware Economic Development Office, where he has worked every day to attract businesses to Delaware and to help them create good jobs in our communities.

Alan took over at a time when communities throughout Delaware were hemorrhaging jobs and feeling the very worst effects of the great recession. Today Delaware's unemployment rate sits a full point below the national average at 4.5 percent, in part thanks to the great effort of Alan Levin's.

During his tenure, Alan exemplified what it means to be a public servant. It didn't matter to Alan if someone came to him who was thinking of starting a small business that would employ 4 people or if it was a company thinking of moving to Delaware and bringing 400 jobs. No matter what, if it was going to help Delaware, Alan was ready to meet with anyone and show them why there was no better place than the First State, our home State of Delaware, to run a business.

Of course, Alan's service to our State began well before 2009. Long a leader in the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce for more than two decades, Alan ran Happy Harry's Pharmacy, a family business that he grew over decades of discipline and capable leadership, ultimately expanding it to 76 stores in our region. That success is an important part of who Alan is, because to really know him is to know that his job at the Delaware Economic Development Office was not one he needed; it was one he chose.

Alan could have continued and built his success in the business world—anyone could tell you that—but he made a decision at that key point in his life to strive for something else, something more to make his home State a better place. He recognized his considerable skills, talents, and knowledge and decided to use them to help families and businesses across our State succeed. That is a profound thing. In a world where there are far too many people who shun public life and public service for good reason, Alan stepped up to the plate when Delaware needed him most.

Now, fortunately for all of us, Alan isn't going far. We will still get to see him in southern Delaware, where he will be working with SoDel Concepts in their successful restaurants. It is hopeful that he will get a chance to trade in his business suit for flip-flops and a beach chair from time to time. I just wanted to take this moment on the floor to thank Alan and to thank especially his wife Ellen and his wonderful sons, Andrew, Daniel, Jason, and Jess, for letting us have Alan in public service for so many years where he has made such a difference. It is my hope he will get to enjoy his family, his grandchildren, and the entire Delaware community, which is so grateful to Alan for his public service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). The Senator from Utah.

WORKING TOGETHER IN THE SENATE

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the progress of the Senate under the new Republican leadership. In the first 6 months of this Congress, we have passed bipartisan, commonsense legislation that has delivered meaningful results to the American people.

As we work to return the Senate to regular order—and that has not been an easy thing—we are rebuilding this institution's reputation as the world's greatest deliberative body, something that it has not been over the last number of years. To that end, we have renewed our commitment to the open amendment process and the committee system, which give all Members—from the most seasoned chairman to the freshman—a hand in drafting and improving legislation.

The progress we have made is remarkable, especially considering the difficult situation we inherited. At the end of the 113th Congress, partisan grandstanding and festering dysfunction had tarnished this body's reputation. This Senate was beset by gridlock and weak leadership more focused on political messaging than constructive legislation. At the end of the 2014, Congress had a historically low approval rating of only 9 percent and, in many respects, the way the Congress was being run, we deserved it. Americans had every reason to disapprove of what was going on. These persistent low approval ratings reflected the American people's frustration with their Federal Government and the direction of our country under the failed policies and leadership of the President and his party.

Under our new leadership, we are working to regain the trust of the American people. Already, the Senate has taken up and passed nearly 40 pieces of bipartisan legislation, and our extensive efforts to restore confidence in the legislative branch are beginning to bear fruit. Consider our legislative accomplishments thus far.

At the beginning of this Congress, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass the Hoeven-Manchin bill to authorize the unreasonably delayed Keystone XL Pipeline.

We also passed my Amy and Vicky act, a bill I authored to create an effective, balanced restitution process for victims of child pornography. Others deserve lots of credit on that bill.

In a bipartisan manner, Republican leaders cooperated with Democrats to repeal and replace Medicare's sustainable growth rate. Instead of resorting to patch after patch, year after year—that is what we had been doing here for so long; that is really a tremendous achievement—we came together to work out a balanced package that both protects seniors and includes important cost controls. It demonstrated the scope of what Congress can do when Members work together, and it represented an important step forward in reforming our Nation's entitlement programs. With regard to that, we paired it with the CHIP bill, which was the Hatch-Kennedy bill for young children who were left out of the health care system, and that passed too.

We built on this positive momentum when the Senate passed the Cornyn-Klobuchar human trafficking bill—a very important bill. With this legislation, Congress established a special fund providing victims of human trafficking the resources they need to repair their shattered lives.

This bill suffered a number of hiccups along the way. Yet ultimately we were able to come together in a collaborative fashion to overcome our differences.

We again bridged the partisan divide when we passed the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—a monumental piece of legislation. This legislation ensures Congress's right to oversee any agreement the President reaches with Iranian leaders and reasserts the Senate's valuable role in approving international treaties. Despite our divergent opinions on the Obama administration's negotiation efforts, we were able to devise a compromise that earned the support of nearly every Senator.

These are not small achievements. It is amazing we have been able to do so many in these first 6 months. Just last week, we worked together, yet again, in a bipartisan fashion to pass the National Defense Authorization Act, reauthorizing important defense programs critical to our national security—a complex and very difficult bill to handle. And no less than our wonderful Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, handled that matter on the floor, along with the help of a lot of others.

In passing this legislation, our new majority did not run roughshod over the minority. Rather, we collaborated with our colleagues in the minority to draft legislation agreeable to both sides.

Our bipartisan work hasn't been limited to this Chamber. We have also worked closely with the White House to pass trade legislation critical to our country's economic future. In fact, just a short while ago, the President called me and thanked me. His top Chief of Staff Denis McDonough called me yesterday and thanked me—something that, frankly, I was very grateful for.

In fact, yesterday's passage of trade promotion authority might be the

strongest evidence to date that the Senate is back to work on behalf of the American people. This bipartisan piece of legislation is one of the President's highest trade priorities because it supports U.S. job growth, boosts American exports, enhances our ability to negotiate trade agreements, and makes our goods and services more competitive globally. TPA will give the United States viable pathways to enter into critical trade agreements with our international partners to level the playing field for American exporters, creating and sustaining more and better paying American jobs.

Beyond the content of our legislation, the Senate's return to regular order and an open amendment process is remarkable. At times, it has been difficult to make progress in restoring the Senate as an institution, and the consideration of complex legislation can be a slow and arduous process. Nonetheless, this body has been deliberate and thoughtful in our consideration of legislation. Often, these bills have been considered for several weeks and occupied many hours of valuable floor time. These bills have required dozens of amendments to be considered before they were ultimately put before the Senate for a vote on final passage. Though this process is difficult and often laborious, it is the way things should be done.

I have had friends on the other side of the floor come to me and say: This is wonderful. We are able to have amendments again. We are able to do the work of the Senate again. We feel good about it, and they feel good about doing the bipartisan work that we have done.

The Presiding Officer did an awful lot of good bringing the Hoeven bill through, and we can name so many others. There are great people on the other side who have cooperated. With regard to that, I think of Senator WYDEN, who has worked very hard and very closely with me on a number of bills but especially the trade promotion authority bill, which is the key bill to enable this administration to enter into good agreements with foreign countries that are important to us. Without that bill, we wouldn't have these agreements. We may still not have them, unless they are done right, but at least we can say we have given the administration the opportunity to do it right.

Now, in spite of our successes so far in this Congress, there are still many who oppose and criticize our efforts to restore the Senate to its proper function. The minority leader might be foremost among these detractors. I wish to take just a moment to respond to some of his sharp criticisms. In recent remarks, the Democratic leader has willfully ignored the significant achievements of the current Congress, even arguing the Republican-led Senate has done nothing to help the American people. The minority leader's accusation is patently false. He lobs these criticisms to distract the American people from his failed leadership in the last Congress.

I happen to like the minority leader. He is my friend. I care for him. But there is no excuse for that kind of language on the floor of the Senate. I have to say he has cooperated and helped do some of these bills. He ought to be taking credit for it rather than lobbing jabs from across the aisle.

Contrary to the claims of the minority leader, the current Republican leadership has been remarkably successful at doing exactly what Leader MCCONNELL promised we would do: pass legislation that improves the economy, makes it easier for Americans to get jobs, and helps restore Americans' confidence in their country and government. Importantly, the majority leader has kept his promise of restoring the proper role of the Senate by enhancing deliberation on legislation through an open and robust committee and floor amendment process.

To appreciate fully the success of the new Congress, we need only to review the failures of the past. As we all remember too well, under the tight-fisted control of the Democratic leader, the Senate, in all of 2014, was only allowed to take a total of 17 rollcall votes on amendments—17 rollcall votes on amendments in an entire year. Some of the Democratic Senators who were defeated had never brought up an amendment on the floor of the Senate. They didn't have that privilege. They didn't have that remarkable experience.

The Democratic leader shut down the amendment process by abusing procedural mechanisms and dismantled the rights of the minority in this Chamber. This dysfunction lies in stark contrast to the way Leader MCCONNELL is leading the Senate today. Under the new majority leader, we have made progress that is tangible, even measurable. Just look at the facts: In the 6 months of 2015, the Senate has taken over 130 rollcall votes on amendments.

In other words, the Senate has taken more than seven times as many rollcall votes on amendments in the first 6 months of this year than the current majority leader allowed in all of last year. It is worth noting that a majority of the rollcall votes taken this year have been on amendments introduced by Democrats. A majority of the rollcall votes taken this year have been on amendments by our friends on the other side. They haven't been blocked. This is powerful evidence that the Republican-led Senate is committed to working in a manner respectful of the minority's voice.

Additionally, we have considered and agreed to 183 amendments this year. That means we have agreed to nearly four times as many amendments in the first 6 months of this year than we did in the first 6 months of the last Congress. I am pleased the Senate has largely returned to operating under regular order with increased deliberation and an open and robust floor consideration process. The bottom line is that this increased transparency and deliberation has greatly benefited the work of Senators on both sides of the aisle.

That said, I think we can all agree the Senate has a lot more work to do. I am hopeful we can capitalize on our recent success by continuing to tackle difficult issues, such as sustaining the highway trust fund, working toward comprehensive tax reform, and improving our Nation's cyber security. These are important bills and we have to work on them. As we work together to find solutions to these problems, I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to practice the principle of mutual restraint.

Senator Mike Mansfield, the longtime Democratic Senate majority leader, and a wonderful man whom I knew, counseled that the remedy to partisan gridlock in the Senate ''lies not in the seeking of shortcuts, not in the cracking of nonexistent whips, not in wheeling and dealing, but in an honest facing of the situation and a resolution of it by the Senate itself, by accommodation, by respect for one another, [and] by mutual restraint.''

Now, both parties must make certain sacrifices in order for the Senate to function. The majority leadership must generally refrain from bringing divisive and partisan messaging bills before the Senate for consideration and should seek to gather bipartisan support through a consensus. Mutual restraint also requires in most cases the majority leadership to allow legislation to be thoroughly vetted by the committee of jurisdiction and to allow for an open amendment process, which provides an opportunity for all Senators to contribute to the Chamber's work.

I remember how the ObamaCare bill was formulated. It was formulated not in the committee of jurisdiction, where we had all those people with all that experience; it was done with the White House, in a small room with just a few Senators who decided this monumental bill—passed only with Democratic support—that we are now all subject to. That bill has been anything but a success. Now, I have to say, all Senators should be able to contribute to the Chamber's work.

This duty is not incumbent upon the majority alone. The minority also has to practice restraint, including resisting impulses to filibuster routine unanimous consent requests and insisting on poison pill amendments. The minority in the Senate has powerful rights that can be used to grind the work of the Senate to a halt, but the minority should not abuse those rights. At times, it can be appropriate for the minority to utilize all of the procedural mechanisms at their disposal to legitimately and judiciously disagree with a serious policy being considered by the Senate. However, when the minority deliberately frustrates the operation of the Senate for partisan gain, it is an

offense to the institution—and I say that with regard to both sides.

My friend the majority leader has been committed to conducting the Senate's consideration of legislation in a deliberate manner, with prudence and restraint. He has renewed and enhanced deliberation and open consideration of serious policy proposals. We have not made a point of pushing Republican messaging bills, but rather we have worked hard to find broad bipartisan consensus. Although it has not been easy by any means, I feel confident the American people are beginning to regain confidence in the legislative branch as it is being led today under Republican leadership.

We still have a long way to go before we can restore the full confidence and trust of the American people—at least that is my viewpoint—but we are really once again moving the country in the right direction. This Senate is a dramatic improvement from the way business has been conducted over the past several years. We are not focused on scoring cheap political points but are deliberating serious policy and legislation aimed at meaningful reform.

The Senate, under Republican leadership, has passed bipartisan legislation that will improve the lives of all Americans. We are doing the right kind of work, and we are doing it the right way. We are not focused on political gimmicks and pageantry; rather, we are interested in real, substantive policy aimed at strengthening the Nation, our economy, and our national security. We have made significant progress, and we continue to work together to restore our reputation as the world's greatest deliberative body.

In the Finance Committee alone, as of yesterday we have passed 36 bipartisan bills out of that committee, which wasn't really allowed to function during the last number of years. It was so bad that Senator Coburn left it. He said we are not getting anything done. Frankly, we weren't. A lot of that was because of the way the Senate was being led at that particular time.

I am pleased to say I think the Finance Committee is restoring itself as the greatest deliberative committee on Capitol Hill, certainly in the Senate.

In that regard, it has been a privilege to work with PAUL RYAN over in the House. In all of our meetings, there has never been any real push to be partisan. It is to get the job done, to do it the best way we possibly can, to involve our brethren and sisters on the other side, and to make sure our side does what really ought to be done in our respective bodies.

We are going to have tie-ups in the future, I know, but it was getting so it was in every way. And I suspect there were sincere motives in doing that, in trying to protect the then-majority's side before this year. I understand that. But it went way too far, and it was not the way to run the Senate.

We all know Senator MCCONNELL is a strong, tough, intelligent, complete Senator and certainly majority leader. That can irritate some people who don't look at the real facts and don't look at what he really stands for and what he is really trying to do. But I have found him to be fair. I have found him to be fair and deliberate and somebody you can work with as long as you are working in good faith.

I would like to see both of our leaders work in good faith so we can do things for our country first and quit worrying so much about who is going to run the Senate for the next couple of years or who is going to win or who is going to get the big headline. Let's worry about running the country in the proper way. To do that, it takes both sides, not just one side, and it takes a deliberative process that elevates the Senate again to the greatest deliberative body in the world. We can do it.

I caution both leaders to do everything in their power to see that we do work together as much as we can. When we fight, let's have real good fights, but let's do it over substantive things, not just deliberated procedural matters.

But the fact is that we have done quite a bit in these first 6 months. The leader has done a great job in getting us there, and we have had a lot of help from our friends on the other side. I want to keep that system going so we can do even better.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant minority leader.

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the Supreme Court of the United States came down with its decision in King v. Burwell. I think it will probably be a decision that is remembered for a long time, certainly by Members of Congress. We were watching carefully, closely, wondering what the Supreme Court was going to say about the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare. We passed it 5 years ago, and it was about the issue of health insurance—how many Americans who were uninsured would be insured under the Affordable Care Act and how much it would help health insurance cost.

Controversial, as the Senator from Utah just noted—it was passed on a partisan roll call. There was an effort to write a bipartisan bill, and it failed. There was no sentiment shared by both sides of the aisle to create the Affordable Care Act or anything like it.

How important is this decision, King v. Burwell, a decision which basically sustained the Affordable Care Act and said that the tax credits—which are part of the act—given to families in lower income situations were legal and constitutional? I think it is one of the most important decisions because I think health insurance is one of the most important things in our lives.

If you have ever been in the position as a father with a sick child, a seriously ill child without health insurance, you will never forget it. I know. I have been there. As a law student, my wife and I got married and had a little baby. She had some challenges, and we had no health insurance. Every time we took her to the hospital, every time we saw a doctor, I wondered if she was getting the best that she could get because we didn't have health insurance. It meant waiting in big waiting rooms with a lot of other people without health insurance and hoping that whoever walked through that door, that doctor would be just what my daughter needed. I will never forget it. When it comes to a time when people are debating about health insurance and how important it is, it sure is important to me. It was even when I didn't have it, as I realized how insecure and uncertain I was.

About 5 years ago, I was down in southern Illinois, Marion, IL, which is a great little town. I stayed there in deep southern Illinois at a local motel, and in the morning I would go up and go in. They had a little breakfast buffet there. There was a sweet lady named Judy. She was always there; ''Senator, what can I do for you?'' and all that. She couldn't have been nicer. I got to know Judy over the times we stayed there, and we talked about her life.

Judy was 60 years old. She was working part time in this motel—kind of in the world of hospitality—and she took care of guests when they went to the breakfast buffet in the morning. We talked about her life. She had grown up in southern Illinois. She had worked all the way through her life, job after job after job. I knew she was a hard-working lady and a good person.

One day she said to me: Senator, I have heard about this debate in Washington about the Affordable Care Act, and I am scared.

I said: Why?

She said: I don't think I can afford it, and they won't let me pick my own doctor.

I said: Well, Judy, I don't want to get personal, but I need to ask you a few questions. Do you have health insurance?

No. No, Senator. I have never had health insurance in my life. I have never had a job that offered health insurance.

She was 60 years old.

I said: Now I am going to get real personal. Can you give me an idea how much money you make? If you want to, can you tell me?

Sure.

She told me.

I said: Judy, when it is all over, you are going to be covered by Medicaid. You won't be paying for this. For the first time in your life, you are going to have health insurance. You are going to be able to go to the hospital and not be a charity case.

She said: It won't cost me?

No. Your income is so low that you qualify for this tax credit and this

treatment under Medicaid. You don't have to pay out of pocket.

The next time I went back there after the law passed and we knew she had Medicaid coverage, Judy didn't look the same. She was obviously sick.

I said: What is wrong?

She said: Well, I just got diagnosed with diabetes.

I said: Well, at least you have Medicaid.

She said: I sure do. And I have a doctor. I like him, and he is helping me. And I have a hospital that I can go to if I need to.

There she was, for the first time in her life at the age of 60, with diabetes, and with health insurance. From my point of view, that is what this decision and this debate is all about.

What we set out to do with the passage of the Affordable Care Act was to make sure health insurance was there for that young couple getting started with a baby who otherwise wouldn't have had health insurance or that 60-year-old woman who was working a job that didn't provide health insurance benefits who was facing diabetes.

Well, it has helped a lot of people. When we started the debate on the Affordable Care Act, there were 50 million Americans—out of over 320 million, 50 million—who had no health insurance. Because of this law, the Affordable Care Act, almost one-third of them—16 million—now have health insurance. I think that is a good thing. Most Americans would celebrate that we have reduced the rolls of the uninsured by one-third. It means they have peace of mind having coverage.

Roy Romanowski, in Chicago—I sat next to Roy at a community health clinic in a neighborhood. I go to those clinics all the time because I think they are one of the best places on Earth to meet some great medical professionals who are doing a wonderful service for a lot of people who live in a neighborhood and who wouldn't have a place to go.

Roy Romanowski, a big, barrel-chested Polish guy from Chicago, is a musician. He plays a guitar. He never had a solid 40-hour-a-week job in his life and never had health insurance. He has it now. The Affordable Care Act gave Roy health insurance coverage for the first time—health insurance coverage he can afford.

That is what the decision in this court case was about today—whether people like Roy and Judy would have health insurance. And it does something else: It moves us along the path we want to be on—and not only that more and more people have health insurance. Here is good news for everybody: The rate of growth in health care costs is going down. Oh, it is not a dramatic plunge. We didn't expect it to be. But even as it starts to level off a little bit, it has a dramatic impact. It means even if you don't have your health insurance plan through the Affordable Care Act, if you have it through your employer, the health insurance premiums your employer faces are less than they would have been. So it is starting to flatten out this growth and the cost of health care.

What about Medicare? Medicare is important for over 40 million Americans. Here is the great news on Medicare—two things. No. 1, because the overall cost of health care is coming down just a little, in 5 years, the projected solvency of Medicare has been—they have added 13 years to it, 13 more years of solvency for a program critically important to seniors and disabled people. So Medicare has benefited from it as well.

There is a second part. If you are under Medicare and you have prescription Part D, which covers your prescriptions under Medicare, we closed the doughnut hole. The doughnut hole used to be that point in the cost of your prescription drugs when Medicare no longer paid for it and you had to pay for it out of pocket. That was a crazy idea in the law, and it cost seniors thousands of dollars. And then, of course, after they paid out of pocket, Medicare came in to cover the additional expenses. We got rid of that craziness. We eliminated that doughnut hole. So for seniors wanting to take the medicines the doctor has prescribed so they can feel good, be strong, be independent, stay on their own, this Affordable Care Act helped them pay. In Illinois, it was about $1,000 per Medicare recipient per year in prescription drug costs taken care of by the Affordable Care Act.

Let me tell you a couple other things this law did and does. Do you have any children in your family who are going to college? Are you worried about when they graduate from college, whether they have a job and health insurance? I was. My wife and I were worried about our daughter.

I remember calling her.

Jennifer, you just got out of school. Do you have health insurance?

Dad, I don't need it. I am healthy as can be.

That is not what a father wants to hear.

The Affordable Care Act says that your son or daughter can stay under your family plan until they reach the age of 26. I think that is a good thing. As a parent who had a college grad looking for a job, I had the peace of mind of knowing she was under the family health insurance plan.

So the people who want to repeal the Affordable Care Act—do they really want to repeal that provision?

And here is another one that is important. How many of us can say with certainty that in our homes, in our households, there isn't someone with a preexisting condition, someone who—perhaps a child—has had diabetes, a spouse who has had good luck in beating breast cancer or prostate cancer? Someone there is a history of mental illness. In the old days before the Affordable Care Act, what I just described to you were grounds for denying health insurance coverage or charging through the roof. Well, that was changed by the Affordable Care Act. Preexisting conditions no longer disqualify you from health insurance in America.

The President said this morning, after the Supreme Court decision: We will have to explain to our grandkids there was a time when you couldn't get health insurance if you were sick.

Thank goodness that time has passed and the Affordable Care Act protects people. Overall, this act in the last 5 years has made real progress for America. For 16 million Americans, it has given many of them health insurance for the first time in their lives, health insurance they can afford and a tax credit to help them pay for it that was protected today by this Supreme Court decision.

In all of the time since the Affordable Care Act has been the law, we have heard from the other party that they want to repeal it. But in that same period of time, we have never ever heard what they would replace it with. They don't have a better idea. Here is what I hope we will do. I hope we will put behind us this whole effort of let's file another lawsuit, let's vote another time to abolish the Affordable Care Act. I hope instead that there will be a constructive dialogue between Democrats and Republicans to make the Affordable Care Act better.

I voted for it and am proud of it. It is one of the most important votes I ever cast in Congress. But it is not perfect. I tell my town meetings in Illinois that the only perfect law was brought down the side of a mountain by Senator Moses on clay tablets. Ever since then, we have done our best to write laws but know that we have to be ready to improve them and to react to changing circumstances.

We should do the same with the Affordable Care Act. I think there are things we can do to make it stronger, and on a bipartisan basis we should. Until this moment in time of this Supreme Court decision, it has been politically impossible to have that conversation.

The Restaurant Association came to see me. They are worried. They said: Wait a minute. We have a lot of part-time employees and a lot of them don't want health insurance. Their spouses have health insurance. We are looking at the law. We want some clarity here about what our obligation will be under the Affordable Care Act.

They deserve that clarity. I will tell you as I stand here today, I am willing to sit down with any Republican Senator and work out changes and provisions in the law to make sure we treat these employees fairly and we give them coverage and do it in a fashion that is fair to their employer as well as individual employees. These are things we can and should do.

For the longest time, there were people who opposed Social Security—going way back in time 70 or 80 years when it

was created. They said that it will never last; it will never stay. Eventually, public sentiment changed and people realized Social Security was critically important for America.

The same thing was true for Medicare. There were those who said: Socialized medicine, you have to get rid of it. Now, 60 years later, 50 years later, they understand it is part of America. For millions of Americans, it is critically important. Medicaid, the same thing.

I hope today will be that turning point on the Affordable Care Act, where we decide on a bipartisan basis that this is part of our future, providing health insurance for uninsured Americans, doing it in a fair way, and particularly for those in lower income situations.

This was a historic decision, King v. Burwell, at the Supreme Court—6 to 3. A decisive majority opinion said the Affordable Care Act is legal and constitutional and should move forward. I hope that message makes it across the street over to the Halls of Congress.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS V. INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES PROJECT, INC.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning, the Supreme Court also announced its decision in Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs v. Inclusive Communities Project, Inc.

In a major victory for the millions of Americans who rely on the protections of the Fair Housing Act to challenge unfair, discriminatory housing practices, the Court held that disparate impact claims are permissible under the law.

The Fair Housing Act was a landmark civil rights bill passed in 1968 to combat widespread housing discrimination. Under the disparate impact doctrine, the law allows plaintiffs to challenge housing policies that have a ''disproportionally adverse effect on minorities,'' without proving discriminatory intent.

Housing discrimination is rarely as overt today as it was in the 1960s, and disparate impact claims thus play an important role in preventing housing segregation. Federal appeals courts across the country have long held that these types of claims are permissible and constitutional. Today, the Supreme Court rightfully affirmed this principle.

As Justice Kennedy acknowledged in the opinion, the Fair Housing Act plays a ''continuing role in moving the Nation toward a more integrated society.''

This past week has reminded us that we have much to accomplish in creating a more just and equal society. On issues ranging from voting rights to mass incarceration, there are fundamental disparities that we must address.

Thankfully, the Court's ruling today ensures that the full protections of the Fair Housing Act remain intact. We must continue to work to prevent discrimination in housing and give all American families access to safe, affordable homes in inclusive, prosperous communities.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING MAJOR KENNETH M. SLYE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to a very dear friend of mine who has sadly passed away. MAJ Ken Slye, retired from both the U.S. Army and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, died on June 24, 2015, at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center in Louisville. He was 81 years old.

Ken was a retired master Army aviator who did two combat tours in Vietnam, flying both Chinook and Huey helicopters. After his retirement from the Army, Ken was very active in the local Louisville military community as well as that of Fort Knox. He was a past chairman of the Louisville Armed Forces Committee; a four-times past president of the Louisville Chapter, Military Officers Association of America; a member of VFW 1170 Middletown; of the DAV; and of the American Legion G.I. Joe Post 244 in Jeffersontown.

Ken served on the Veteran Experience Board at the Robley Rex VA Medical Center, and in fact he and fellow veteran Carl Kaelin were instrumental in getting the medical center named after Kentucky's own World War I-era vet, Robley Rex. Ken was the recipient of the 2015 Louisville Armed Forces Patriot Award just this past May.

Ken was also heavily involved with professional tennis as an international chair umpire, and he served in the chair in matches all over the United States as well as the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Japan, France, Argentina, Mexico, the Netherlands, and Jamaica. He began his officiating career in 1974 and was a graduate of the first professional tennis officials' school, in 1976 in Dallas. He chaired matches at the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, the French Open, and the Davis Cup.

Ken officiated in 16 matches with legendary player John McEnroe. Ken was the only Kentuckian to chair the final of a Grand Slam Tennis Tournament. He was the chair umpire for the classic 1980 U.S. Open Men's Singles Final between McEnroe and Bjorn Borg, watched on television by 20 million fans and 22,000 in the stands at Flushing Meadow. He was the chair umpire at the 1987 Wimbledon semi-final match between Stefan Edberg and Ivan Lendl. Other tennis legends Ken encountered during his career were Arthur Ashe, Stan Smith, Ilie Nastase, and Jimmy Connors.

Born in Boston and raised in Wellesley, MA, Ken moved to Louisville because it was the hometown of his wife, Linda. He sang bass with the Louisville Thoroughbred Chorus for 4 years and served as its manager for 6 years. He served for 20 years with the Secretary of Defense's staff on top of his heroic service with the Army.

Ken is survived by his wife, Linda, as well as his son Scott Slye and daughter Susan Fabiano; his granddaughters Stacey Brandon and Audrey Ribley; his six great-grandchildren, Ashlynn, Will, Addison, Cooper, Scott, and Brystal; and Linda's son and daughter Jeff Furnish and Meg Furnish.

MAJ Ken Slye bravely served his country in uniform during a time of war, and he served his fellow veterans when he returned home. He will be greatly missed, not only by the military community throughout Kentucky but also by his many friends who knew and loved him.

I am proud to count myself among that group of friends. I relied on Ken's advice and friendship. I want to extend my deepest condolences to his family in their time of loss. The Commonwealth of Kentucky joins them in mourning this heroic man, patriot, and soldier.

REMEMBERING THOMAS BLAKE RATLIFF

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to a very dear friend of mine and a great Kentuckian who has sadly passed away. Thomas Blake Ratliff of Pikeville, a Navy veteran, died on April 20, 2015. He was 88 years old.

Born on May 27, 1926, Tom attended elementary, junior high, and high school at the Pikeville College Academy and graduated in 1944. Upon graduation he joined the Navy and served in the Pacific theater during World War II until being honorably discharged in 1946.

After his naval service, Tom attended Pikeville College and the University of Kentucky, where he received a bachelor of laws in 1951 and a juris doctorate in 1970. Tom and his wife Myrtle returned home to Pikeville after Tom graduated law school, and he practiced law and also became involved in the coal business. Tom also had business interests in hotels, restaurants, the Reynold's Body Company and in properties in Kentucky and Florida.

Tom was also active in civic affairs and public service. A passionate supporter of the Republican Party, he served in various capacities for the local, State, and national GOP. He was a great supporter of mine and I remember well his enthusiasm and dedication

over the years. He was elected as the Commonwealth attorney for the 35th Judicial Circuit and served in that post from 1964 to 1970. He was also the Republican candidate for Lieutenant Governor in 1967.

In addition to his work and positions in politics, Tom gave generously of his time to many worthy causes, including service as the director of the Pikeville Methodist Hospital and as a trustee of Pikeville College. He was the president of the Pikeville Rotary Club and volunteered his time with the Coal Operators Association and the Boy Scouts.

Tom was a Christian who attended Pikeville United Methodist Church. He also served on the church's administrative board. His hobbies included reading, traveling, boating, and being physically active. He loved to travel and had visited all the continents.

Tom is survived by his wife, Myrtle; the two were married on August 21, 1949. He is also survived by his daughters Susan G. Tillotson and Jan E. Sharpe; his sons Kevin N. Ratliff and Chris Ratliff; his grandchildren Elizabeth J. Spraggs, Juliet Kamper, Jonathan K. Wright, Thomas N. Ratliff, Daniel C. Ratliff, and Jordan B. Ratliff; his great-grandchild, Tiara Wright; his sister, Charlene R. Easton; and his brother, Roger E. J. Ratliff.

I want to extend my deepest condolences to Myrtle and to the family in this time of loss. The Commonwealth of Kentucky joins them in mourning this hero and public servant. Tom Ratliff bravely served his country in uniform during World War II, and served his fellow Kentuckians in public office. He was a hero and a patriot who I was proud to know and to call a friend. He will be greatly missed, not only by his family but by his many friends who knew and loved him.

RECOGNIZING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF MIRACLE FLIGHTS FOR KIDS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, today I recognize the 30th anniversary of Miracle Flights for Kids.

Since its founding in southern Nevada in 1985, Miracle Flights for Kids has been providing airline tickets for sick children in low-income families. These flights are truly miracles that allow children to receive the specialized medical care they need and otherwise would not have access to due to distance and travel costs. In the beginning, Miracle Flights for Kids was a small organization that served a handful of local children, but today the organization coordinates hundreds of flights a month, including a record 976 flights in April 2015. To date, Miracle Flights for Kids has coordinated more than 92,000 flights resulting in 50 million miles of travel. These flights have helped to save and improve the quality of life for countless children.

Families from across the country and the world contact Miracle Flights for Kids for assistance, and the organization works to ensure eligible children have access to the care they need, regardless of how far away the treatment center is located. They have flown children relatively short distances, such as flights from Nevada to California, and longer distances, including flights from Alaska to Colorado. They have even flown children from as far away as Turkey to Maryland. Miracle Flights for Kids also works to ensure that children can travel back to their treatment center as many times as their doctor deems necessary. For instance, they provided more than 40 flights from Ohio to Texas for one little girl so she could receive the medical attention she required.

Having a sick child is a devastating, trying experience for any parent. The services provided by Miracle Flights for Kids give families some peace-of-mind as they focus on getting their child healthy. I commend Miracle Flights for Kids for 30 years of exceptional service to children and families in Nevada and throughout the world. Their work is truly appreciated and admired, and I wish them continued success for years to come.

RECOGNIZING MARGARET A. FOCARINO AND JAMES D. SMITH

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I wish to take a moment to recognize two distinguished public servants who are leaving their positions at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, or USPTO,—Margaret ''Peggy'' Focarino, Commissioner for Patents, and James D. Smith, Chief Administrative Patent Judge. Both have played critical roles in bringing the USPTO into the 21st century by working tirelessly to implement the Leahy-Smith America Invents Act, the most comprehensive update of U.S. patent law since the 1950s. The patent system is one of the cornerstones of our economy. It drives innovation, growth, and job creation. This country has been fortunate to have dedicated leaders such as Ms. Focarino and Mr. Smith in key positions at this crucial Agency.

Peggy Focarino became Commissioner for Patents in 2012, where she has been instrumental in developing and implementing administrative changes made by the Leahy-Smith act. Working collaboratively with all stakeholders in the patent community while implementing this law is a hallmark of her tenure as Commissioner for Patents. As someone who worked for nearly 6 years to pass comprehensive patent reform legislation, I can attest to the fact that it is not easy to bring all of these stakeholders together and build consensus. The provisions she worked to implement include the transition to first-inventor-to-file and the USPTO's fee-setting authority, but her work encompassed a number of other aspects of the Leahy-Smith act as well.

Ms. Focarino's impressive tenure as Commissioner for Patents likely did not come as a surprise to anyone who followed her rise within the USPTO. She started at the Agency in 1977 as a patent examiner. In 1997, she was promoted to the senior executive service. Throughout her almost 40 years at the USPTO, she distinguished herself as a leader within the Agency, receiving the Department of Commerce Silver Medal for Leadership in 2010. She also received American University's School of Public Affairs Roger W. Jones Award for Executive Leadership in 2010. While the USPTO will continue to do important work without her, there is little doubt that her leadership will be missed.

James Smith also played a key role in the implementation of the Leahy-Smith act. Mr. Smith became the Chief Administrative Patent Judge in 2011. During his tenure, Mr. Smith worked to implement the postgrant review proceedings the law established. Thanks to Mr. Smith's leadership at the Patent Trial and Appeal Board, these postgrant proceedings have been successful in providing low-cost alternatives to litigation for reviewing the patentability of issued patents. His strong and varied background in the private sector, including time spent working on intellectual property issues at large companies and law firms, served him well as he helped the USPTO implement these essential components of the Leahy-Smith act.

It is always difficult to see good public servants leave their roles. Ms. Focarino and Mr. Smith can look back proudly at their record of public service and point to meaningful accomplishments that have improved the U.S. patent system. I wish them both the best in their new endeavors.

VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2015

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I support the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2015, an important step on the road to protecting the right to vote for all Americans. It responds to a recent Supreme Court ruling that rolled back critical voting protections that had proven effective for decades and that Congress had reauthorized several times.

This landmark legislation would reaffirm the importance of the vote as a pillar of our democracy and restore a powerful shield to combat voting discrimination. I thank Senator LEAHY for his leadership on this bill, and I am proud to be an original cosponsor of a bill that protects access to the ballot box for all American citizens.

Mr. President, 50 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Voting Rights Act of 1965, legislation that he called ''a triumph for freedom as huge as any victory that has ever been won on any battlefield.'' At the time he signed the bill into law, millions of Americans were denied the right to vote based on the color of their skin.

President Johnson called this ''a clear and simple wrong'' and acknowledged that the Voting Rights Act's ''only purpose is to right that wrong.'' With the stroke of a pen, President Johnson enacted a bill that threw open the doors of democracy for all Americans and promised that the precious right to vote would be protected.

The United States has had a long and bumpy road to even achieving that promise. In the decades before the Voting Rights Act, Blacks had been denied their right to vote and participate in the political process. They were harassed and intimidated from going to the polls. Ordinary Americans who marched for themselves or their fellow citizens to exercise the right to vote were beaten, arrested, jailed, or even murdered.

On June 21, 1964, 51 years ago this week, three civil rights workers—two white young men from New York City and one black Mississippian—were killed in Mississippi by the Ku Klux Klan simply for trying to help register African Americans to vote. Their sacrifice inspired countless others to fight to make our union more perfect. Even in my home State, in Cherry Hill, NJ, stands a monument that pays tribute to these three civil rights workers who died in the struggle for equality.

Few things made African Americans feel less equal in America than being deprived of the basic right of citizenship—the right to vote. They even suffered the indignity of having to count beans in a barrel, take a literacy test, pay a poll tax, or recite from memory the preamble to the Constitution without a glitch just to cast a ballot. As a result of disenfranchising tactics, no Black southerner served in Congress from 1901 to 1973. For decades, the promises of liberty and justice for all embedded in our national charter were simply words on paper.

But the Voting Rights Act changed America. By the end of 1966, 1 year after it became law, only 4 out of the traditional 13 Southern States had less than 50 percent of African Americans registered to vote. In Mississippi alone, Black voter turnout increased from 6 percent in 1964 to 59 percent in 1969. Throughout the South, and indeed our entire country, Blacks and Latinos were elected into public office in significant numbers.

The Voting Rights Act has been the most powerful tool to defend minorities' voting rights. The law established new ground to curb voter discrimination by requiring Federal ''preclearance''—that is, Federal review—of voting law changes in areas with histories of discrimination. And therein lies its power. There is no remedy for citizens after an unfair election has occurred. Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was the only Federal remedy that could prevent unfair elections before they took place.

The lesson of history is clear—section 5 of the Voting Rights Act has made America live up to its promises of liberty and justice by ensuring that every citizen has an equal opportunity to participate in our democracy. That is why preserving the Voting Rights Act is so important. That is why Presidents Reagan, Ford, and Nixon had signed prior reauthorizations of the act. That is why in successive Congresses—both Republicans and Democrats—repeatedly reauthorized section 5.

In 2006, Congress reauthorized the Voting Rights Act by an overwhelming bipartisan margin. The law was reauthorized 98 to 0 in the Senate and 390 to 33 in the House and President George W. Bush signed the bill into law. It was a testament to the fact that men and women from across the aisle could come together to protect what is most important to our democracy, the right to vote. A right the Supreme Court has called fundamental because it is preservative of all other rights.

Congress developed an expansive record during its 2006 reauthorization that justified the need for section 5 as a necessary and effective tool to protect minority voters. The House and Senate Judiciary Committees found ample evidence that, even after the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, States and localities continued to engage in overt and subtle tactics that discriminated against minority voters.

Two years ago, a narrowly split and deeply divided Supreme Court disregarded extensive findings of Congress and gutted the Voting Rights Act. In a case known as Shelby County v. Holder, five Justices on the Supreme Court put the Voting Rights Act on life support by striking down the formula by which Congress determines which States and localities are subject to preclearance.

That 2013 decision has nullified the ability of the Federal Government to use the preclearance requirement. Section 5 has protected constitutional guarantees against discrimination in voting even when civil rights laws tried for over 100 years to achieve the success of the Voting Rights Act. The Court reached its decision despite Congress finding an overwhelming record of contemporary voting discrimination. Even the Chief Justice wrote, ''voting discrimination still exists: no one doubts that.''

Yet, the Shelby County decision rested on a flawed logic that the Voting Rights Act was a victim of its own success. Justice Ginsburg's dissent noted a ''catch-22'' in the majority's logic. She said:

> If the statute was working, there would be less evidence of discrimination, so opponents might argue that Congress should not be allowed to renew the statute. In contrast, if the statute was not working, there would be plenty of evidence of discrimination, but scant reason to renew a failed regulatory regime.

I agree with Justice Ginsburg that the Court's decision to strike down section 5 ''when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you're not getting wet.''

Even in the aftermath of Shelby County, States continued to enact laws that make it harder for American citizens to cast their ballot. The Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the Nation's foremost civil rights coalition, released a report last year entitled ''The Persistent Challenges of Voting Discrimination.'' That report documented 148 voting rights violations in America since 2000. Because each voting rights violation often impacts thousands of voters, the report underscored that the impact of racial discrimination in voting is much more profound than the nearly 150 documented violations suggest.

New State laws erect barriers to voting, which restrict voter registration drives, eliminate same-day voter registration, reduce the early voting period, and require photo identification and proof of citizenship to vote. So far, 32 States have passed laws requiring voters to show some kind of identification at the polls, which often have a disparate impact on minority and low-income voters.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act would help prevent voting practices that are likely to be discriminatory before they cause harm. It would create a new nationwide coverage formula requiring States and localities to obtain preclearance for voting changes that have historically been found to be discriminatory. It would enhance the authority of courts to order a preclearance remedy, require greater transparency regarding voting changes, and clarify the Attorney General's authority to send Federal observers to monitor elections across the country.

In his ''I Have a Dream'' speech, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, ''When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir.'' The Voting Rights Act has been one of our most important tools to fulfill that promise and protect voters against discrimination. Congress now has a historic opportunity to ensure that the critical provisions in that law are restored and strengthened.

Now is the time to recommit ourselves to the cause of justice. Now is the time to safeguard our democratic values. Now is the time to protect the progress so many Americans worked so hard to establish. I urge all Senators to support this bill that would combat voter discrimination and breathe life back into the Voting Rights Act.

PASSENGER RAIL LEGISLATION

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, the tragic Amtrak derailment last month shined a light on the critical need to have a strong, safe passenger rail system for the millions of passengers traveling on our rails. My heart goes out to

the families and individuals impacted by the tragedy and I hope we never see anything like it again.

Last week I joined my colleague, Senator WICKER in introducing the Railroad Reform, Enhancement, and Efficiency Act, comprehensive passenger rail legislation that boosts our infrastructure and implements needed reforms. Most importantly, it improves safety on our Nation's railways. This 4-year authorization is a step forward in providing the stability Amtrak needs to be successful and serve the consumers who rely on it.

Across every mode of transportation, America needs critical investment. Nowhere is the investment crisis more pronounced than in New Jersey. The century-old tunnels that run under the Hudson River between New Jersey and New York are reaching a breaking point. We must act with urgency to find State and local partners to replace this critical infrastructure. New Jersey is also home to the Portal Bridge, which is in need of replacement in order to prevent delays and closures that slow our economy. It has been estimated that the loss of the Northeast Corridor could cost the country $100 million per day; a devastating impact that we cannot afford. The costs for these projects are significant, which is why we must find new ways to help advance them.

Our legislation is a game changer for large-scale rail projects. The bill helps unlock and leverage innovative financing opportunities by improving the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing Program, or RRIF. Our legislation will establish new creditworthiness criteria focused on the merits of the project, increase repayment flexibility, help leverage private financing opportunities, and speed up the process of applying for and receiving a loan—all of which can help advance projects like the Gateway Project along the Northeast Corridor. As China and other countries invest tens of billions for rail infrastructure, we must do more than maintain the status quo. Our bill's financing provisions enable us to take every possible advantage to improve our rail capacity and infrastructure.

Our legislation also includes strong safety provisions to protect passengers and workers. Positive train control, or PTC, was cited as a technology that could have prevented the tragic derailment last month and our legislation will advance deployment of PTC by authorizing grants and prioritizing loan applications to support implementation. Additionally, the legislation will improve safety by requiring action on priorities like grade crossings and enforcing speed limits, as well as worker protections, among various other provisions.

It is important to note that a strong authorization of funding for passenger rail is only the start. Investing in the future of America's rail network will also require dedicated and multi-year streams of revenue to support the funding authorized in this bill. I am committed to working with my colleagues on the Finance Committee to make that a reality.

The Railroad Reform, Enhancement, and Efficiency Act is important for our global competitiveness and a forward step in promoting investment in our infrastructure. I thank the committee leadership and Senator WICKER for their support and work on this important legislation that will improve the lives of New Jerseyans and individuals across the country I urge my colleagues to support it.

3RD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA PROGRAM

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I would like to commemorate the third-year anniversary of the creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, DACA, program. On June 15, 2015, we celebrated this successful, although not comprehensive, policy that has provided deportation relief to more than 660,000 child immigrants nationally, including 14,900 in Colorado.

This life-changing program has allowed young people who were brought to the United States as children—DREAMers—to fully engage in their communities by continuing their education and having the opportunity to work. They have been able to open bank accounts, obtain credit cards, and receive driver's licenses. Deferred action is giving these young people relief and some degree of certainty to pursue opportunities that would not have been available to them otherwise.

DACA has given DREAMers hope for their future. They include DREAMers like Alex Alvarado-Rentería who has lived in Carbondale, CO for the last 18 years and has known no other home outside of the United States. Alex's parents migrated from Mexico and worked as farmworkers in order to give their children an opportunity for a better life. Alex was granted DACA and has since graduated from the Metropolitan State University of Denver with a bachelor of arts in history and Chicana/o studies. He now plans to become the first in his family to earn an advanced degree by attending law school and opening up his own immigration law practice one day.

We also have DREAMers like Lourdes Bustos from Denver, CO who has lived in the United States for the last 26 years and who was able to stay with her children upon receiving DACA. It was years before Lourdes realized she was not documented and would not be able to work legally or get a driver's license. Granting her deferred action meant that she would not be separated from her family. Lourdes has graduated from high school and has opened her own painting business.

DACA has played a transformative role in increasing social and economic integration for youth who have been raised and educated in our country. It has given DREAMers an opportunity to invest in their futures. It has empowered DREAMers with a sense of community and belonging.

This program has helped many of our young people, but only offers a temporary solution to the unfair consequences of our broken immigration system. This anniversary should also serve as a stark reminder that every day that Congress fails to enact immigration reform, it jeopardizes our economy, our safety, and our communities. It is time to put politics aside and work to enact comprehensive immigration reform.

TRIBUTE TO ADMIRAL SAMUEL LOCKLEAR

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, after a lifetime of service to our Nation, ADM Samuel J. Locklear III recently stepped down as Commander of United States Pacific Command and retired from the U.S. Navy. On this occasion, I wish to honor Admiral Locklear's 43 years of distinguished uniformed service to our Nation.

Admiral Locklear graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1977. He has led at every level from command-at-sea to theater command. Prior to assuming command of the United States Pacific Command, he commanded U.S. Naval Forces Europe and concurrently, U.S. Naval Forces Africa and NATO's Commander of the Allied Joint Force Command, where his leadership was instrumental in galvanizing an effective coalition of 18 NATO nations to support the complex Libya air campaign.

At Pacific Command, Admiral Locklear provided the strategic vision required to lead in a region vital to America's future peace and prosperity. He has presided over the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific with an even-keeled leadership approach that has focused our Nation in a time of difficult security challenges and austere budgets. Pacific Command is the oldest and largest of our geographic commands encompassing roughly half of the Earth's surface, extending from pole to pole and across the vastness of two great oceans. Admiral Locklear skillfully navigated the complexities and competing interests of this expansive theater. He has worked to strengthen alliances, reinvigorate old ones, cultivate new partnerships, and maintain a robust forward presence to assure and defend our allies and partners.

Admiral Locklear's legacy of service will be as a driving force behind a renewed commitment to protecting America's enduring interests in the Asia-Pacific region. When the Nation needed its very best in military experience, leadership, and advice to confront the challenges and threats we face globally, Admiral Locklear answered the call.

I join many past and present members of the Senate Armed Services Committee in my gratitude to ADM Samuel Locklear for his outstanding

leadership and his unwavering commitment to the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific region. His impact will continue into the coming decades and our Navy and our Nation will feel his absence. I wish him and his wife Pam ''fair winds and following seas.''

REMEMBERING LIEUTENANT ROBERT ''STAN'' LOWE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, today I wish to honor and remember one of Wyoming's many World War II heroes, LT Robert ''Stan'' Lowe. On Friday, June 19, 2015, Wyoming and our Nation lost one its most revered veterans advocates. Stan lived to be 92 years old.

In 1943, Stan chose to serve his Nation rather than complete his college studies and join the U.S. Merchant Marines. The Merchant Marines' mission was one of the most dangerous and important missions during World War II. The mission was critical to ensuring our servicemen had the resources they needed to ultimately defeat tyranny. While Lieutenant Lowe was keeping the sea lanes open and secure and he also had more than one job. Stan was a staff officer handling payroll and personnel matters, ran the ship store, and carried out chaplain duties. He even served as a tour coordinator for port calls to keep the young mariners out of trouble. In addition to manning their battle stations, this was the life of a Merchant Marine.

When Lieutenant Lowe returned to the United States in 1946, he like many of his fellow veterans returned to school. He went on to get a law degree. Like your traditional Merchant Marine, Stan never wore just one hat. He was first a mariner and then an attorney. He served in the Wyoming State House of Representatives and as the Carbon County Attorney. Throughout most of Stan's professional career he served as general counsel to True Oil.

Stan was the first commissioner appointed to Wyoming Veterans Commission. He served under two Governors and chaired the commission. He retired with the title of chairman emeritus. Stan never stopped serving our veterans or our community. Stan was a mentor and teacher to many of Wyoming's veterans. In every veteran he came across, he instilled the virtue that the oath servicemen and women take does not expire when you take off the uniform. He strongly believed he had responsibility to help his fellow veterans to honor and respect current servicemen and women and to serve his community.

Stan was always very involved in his community working with the Casper Rotary Club and the American Legion to name a few. He always worked behind the scenes for many causes especially for veterans. If it was the veterans' museum, efforts to protect the benefits of the widows of veterans, WWII Honor Flights or veteran license plates, Stan probably had his finger prints all over it. Stan also fought hard to get the Merchant Marines recognized with veteran status. He and Merchant Marines around the Nation finally got this much deserved recognition in 1988.

For almost 30 years, on every Memorial Day, Stan would recite Flanders Field at the Oregon Trail Veterans Cemetery. It was always a humbling experience. In his later years, despite the pain, Stan would rise from his chair like a maestro stepping up to a podium. With a quiet tone that could reach the back of the chapel, Stan would begin by reciting the poem. His voice would draw you into a moment in time reminding you of the silence of peace. Children and adults alike would hang on his every word and Stan's voice, like a lullaby, reminded us of soldiers who were loved and paid the ultimate price for freedom. For that moment, you felt warm and secure in their remembrance. As gently he begun he would end and quietly sit. The only sound you could hear was the breathing of the crowd.

Stan was preceded in death by his wife Anne ''Pat'' Kirtland Selden Lowe, and is survived by his two children Robert J. Lowe and wife Lanette and Meganne L. Acres and husband Craig, sister-in-law Ruth Selden Sturgill, brother-in-law George L. Selden, grandchildren Parker and Dalton Lowe, Hannah and Ben Acres, niece Lauren and husband Bill Gasmick, nephew John Lefferdink and Lanette's father Jerry Kelly.

Stan epitomizes the service and sacrifice of our men and women in uniform and service to our communities. It also epitomizes the Rotary motto ''Service Above Self.'' People like Stan Lowe do not come around often so we thank him for all he has done to make our Nation safe and Wyoming a better State.

Stan, my friend, as they say in the Merchant Marines, ''fair winds and following seas.''

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE NASWA 80TH ANNIVERSARY

● Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I wish to honor a long standing New Hampshire institution, often called ''the ultimate NH Resort Destination.'' The NASWA Resort at Weirs Beach in Laconia, NH, also known as, ''The Naz,'' is named for the natural spring water that was found at the site of the original cabins.

This year, the NASWA will celebrate its 80th year of continuous operation in the Granite State. As the 6th annual NASWA Day approaches, it is a time to celebrate the thousands of people from New Hampshire and around the country who have visited this relaxing destination overlooking Paugus Bay on Lake Winnipesaukee.

Drawing guests from the Lakes Region to the White Mountains, the NASWA is a place for people to enjoy the beauty of the Granite State, family fun, summertime entertainment and recreation. People of all ages can enjoy paddleboats, fine and casual dining, gather with friends, or take a swim in the lake. Founded by Greek immigrants in 1935, the NASWA is still a family-run business, owned and operated by Hope Makris, who continues to live on the property, her daughters Cynthia and Karen, and the rest of the family. To this day, you will find Hope in the kitchen, baking all of the desserts, including Greek pastries.

The Makris family has made tremendous contributions to the community. Each year, the NASWA hosts the Peter Makris Memorial Run in honor of Hope's late husband, which benefits the Laconia Fire Department's Life Saving Fund and Water Rescue Team. The Makris family is also committed to serving veterans. Hope's daughter Cynthia serves as the Lakes Region chairwoman of the Easter Seals Veterans Count program; and for the past 14 years, the NASWA has hosted the Easter Seals Land and Lake Poker Run. The run further benefits the Easter Seals of New Hampshire and the Veterans Count program.

As a native Granite Stater and on behalf of the State of New Hampshire, I congratulate the NASWA and the Makris family. After 80 years, the NASWA continues to be a beloved New Hampshire destination, and I wish the Makris family the very best for many more decades to come.●

REMEMBERING RALPH J. ROBERTS

● Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I wish today to remember Ralph J. Roberts, a proud Pennsylvanian and a national business leader. Ralph passed away on June 18, 2015, at the age of 95, after a long life of personal and professional success.

To many across our Nation, Ralph was best known as the founder of Comcast, where he served for 46 years as the chief executive officer. Navigating complex technological developments in a competitive entertainment market, Ralph's entrepreneurial spirit helped lead Comcast from a small, local startup in 1963 to the country's largest cable television company today. His professional achievements complemented his extensive philanthropic work; Ralph held positions on several charitable boards in Philadelphia, where he offered his business acumen to support local economic and community development projects.

One of the defining aspects of Ralph's career was undoubtedly his enduring partnership with his son Brian, as they built a strong business team while maintaining their close father-son relationship. As the New York Times wrote on June 19, 2015:

Mr. Roberts, typically dapper in his signature bow tie and Brooks Brothers suits, became his son's mentor and sounding board, and the two were admired as a potent business partnership while never displaying the

kind of strained and tempestuous relationship that can flare when a son succeeds a successful father.

''Since I was 12, all I wanted to do was work with my dad,'' Brian Roberts said in an interview for this obituary. ''I believe the reason we are still in this business when so many others have long since departed was his will to succeed, and to do it with certain core values and integrity. Maybe it was losing both his parents before he was 21, living through the Depression, but somehow he became an optimist. He was the most optimistic man I ever knew. He never told me anything I wanted to do at Comcast was a bad idea, and after more than 30 years, you'd think I've had a lot of bad ideas.''

Together, Brian and Ralph had many good ideas that brought television to tens of millions across America. We are all forever grateful for Ralph Roberts' contributions to the American business world and to telecommunications. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and our Nation benefited from Ralph's hard work and vision. Our prayers are with his wife Suzanne, his children, and his grandchildren.●

REMEMBERING COLONEL PAUL F. DUDLEY, RETIRED

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today we honor the life and service of Col. Paul F. Dudley, Retired, whose passing signifies a great loss to Nevada. I send my condolences and prayers to his wife Barbara and all of Mr. Dudley's family in this time of mourning, including his 6 children, 16 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren. Mr. Dudley was a man committed to his family, his country, his State, and his community. He will be sorely missed.

Mr. Dudley was born on April 24, 1925, in Marengo, OH. After graduating from high school, he enlisted in the Marines and served during World War II. Following the war, Mr. Dudley attended Otterbein College and served his local community as an Ohio State Patrol trooper and detective. He later served in the Ohio Air National Guard, following graduating first in his class from the Air Force in Colorado as a nuclear weapons maintenance officer and returning to active duty. Throughout his service with the Ohio Air National Guard, he commanded the NATO Special Ammunition Storage Site in Ghedi, Italy. In 1975, he moved his family to Las Vegas and served at Nellis Air Force Base to command the Aviation Depot Squadron. Mr. Dudley's service to this country has been invaluable.

From serving in World War II, to his Air Force assignments as a nuclear safety officer in Italy, to his duty as an inspector general at the Tan Son Nhut Air Base in South Vietnam, his bravery was without limit. Mr. Dudley received two Distinguished Flying Cross medals for his extraordinary actions as a Marine radioman-gunner during World War II and also flew in 43 combat missions throughout the Pacific campaign.

As a World War II veteran, Mr. Dudley's commitment to his country, as well as his dedication to his family and community, exemplified why the legacy of all World War II veterans must be preserved for generations to come. These veterans truly are the ''greatest generation''—selflessly serving not for recognition, but because it was the right thing to do. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I recognize that Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals, but to ensure they are cared for when they return home. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation.

I extend my deepest sympathies to Barbara and all of Mr. Dudley's family. We will always remember Mr. Dudley for his courageous contributions to the United States of America. His service to his country and dedication to his family and community earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly defended our Nation.

Throughout his life, Mr. Dudley maintained a dedication to keeping this great Nation safe, which I am honored to commend. His patriotism and drive will never be forgotten. Today, I join the Las Vegas community and citizens of the Silver State to celebrate the life of an upstanding Nevadan.●

CONGRATULATING FOOTHILL HIGH SCHOOL

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to congratulate Foothill High School on its team of students selected as the Southwest regional winner and third place overall in the sixth annual Vans Custom Culture shoe designing contest. The contest was highly competitive with 2,529 schools registered to participate. Five students, including April Siglos, Cayleigh Miner, Catherine Swift, Shelby Baker, and Aimee Perry, were chosen to represent the high school at the award ceremony in New York. Students Daniel Di'Antonio and Elizabeth Marshall were also important contributors to the team, participating in the design process. Competitors were required to design pairs of shoes for four categories including art, music, action sports, and local flavor. The team won a total of $4,000 for its achievement in being selected in the top five competitors, a contribution that will help future Foothill students for years to come.

The contest has been utilized by Foothill High School art teacher Sarah Plough as a classroom assignment in recent years, giving students the opportunity to harness their creative side and apply their art skills to a three-dimensional object. Students in Ms. Plough's class were also assigned to participate in local contests, bringing their artwork outside of Foothill High School's walls and into the local community. Ms. Plough's drive to bring opportunity to her students is appreciated by the entire Foothill High School and Las Vegas communities.

The students are shining examples to their fellow Foothill Falcons, focusing a great amount of time and effort to create phenomenal artwork for the competition. They spent 5 weeks working on their designs and even devoted hours over spring break to their projects. They should be proud of their hard work and their great accomplishment.

I am excited to see local students bringing recognition to both Nevada and to Foothill High School for their advancement in a national competition. Their accolade is well deserved. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me and all Nevadans in congratulating Foothill High School for its success and its honorable representation of Nevada.●

TRIBUTE TO RAEGAN ARNOLDY

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Raegan Arnoldy, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Raegan is a graduate of Lyman County High School in Presho, SD. Currently, Raegan is attending the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, where she is majoring in communication studies and business administration. Raegan is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of her experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Raegan Arnoldy for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO MACI BURKE

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Maci Burke, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Maci is a graduate of Chamberlain High School in Chamberlain, SD. Currently, Maci is attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she is majoring in political science. Maci is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of her experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Maci Burke for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DANIELLE KERR

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Danielle Kerr, an intern in my Rapid City, SD, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Danielle is a graduate of Stevens High School in Rapid City, SD as well as the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, UNL, with an English major. Currently she has been accepted into the 2018 class at the UNL College of Law.

Danielle is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of her experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Danielle Kerr for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO ALEX SACHTJEN

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Alex Sachtjen, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Alex is a graduate of Burke High School in Burke, SD. Currently, Alex is attending Augustana College, where he is majoring in government and international affairs and business administration. Alex is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of his experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Alex Sachtjen for all of the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO TIARA TINGLE

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Tiara Tingle, an intern in my Washington, DC, office, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the State of South Dakota.

Tiara is a graduate of Brandon Valley High School in Brandon, SD. Currently, Tiara is attending the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where she is majoring in economics. Tiara is a dedicated worker who has been committed to getting the most out of her experience.

I extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Tiara Tingle for all of the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:18 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agrees to the resolution (H. Res. 340) returning to the Senate the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and, in the opinion of this House, contravenes the first clause of the seventh section of the first article of the Constitution of the United States and is an infringement of the privileges of this House and that such bill, with the Senate amendment thereto, shall be respectfully returned to the Senate with a message communicating this resolution.

At 1:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2042. An act to allow for judicial review of any final rule addressing carbon dioxide emissions from existing fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units before requiring compliance with such rule, and to allow States to protect households and businesses from significant adverse effects on electricity ratepayers or reliability.

The message also announced that the House disagrees to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, and asks for a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints the following Members as managers of the conference on the part of the House:

From the Committee on Armed Services: Messrs. THORNBERRY, FORBES, MILLER of Florida, WILSON of South Carolina, LOBIONDO, BISHOP of Utah, TURNER, KLINE, ROGERS of Alabama, SHUSTER, CONAWAY, LAMBORN, WITTMAN, HUNTER, Mrs. HARTZLER, Messrs. HECK of Nevada, WENSTRUP, Ms. STEFANIK, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Messrs. LANGEVIN, LARSEN of Washington, COOPER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. COURTNEY, Ms. TSONGAS, Messrs. GARAMENDI, JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, and Ms. DUCKWORTH.

The message further announced that the House agrees to the amendment of the Senate to the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1295) to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act, the Generalized System of Preferences, the preferential duty treatment program for Haiti, and for other purposes, without amendment.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1698. A bill to exclude payments from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, with amendments:

S. 1180. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to modernize the integrated public alert and warning system of the United States, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–73).

By Mr. BLUNT, from the Committee on Appropriations, without amendment:

S. 1695. An original bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–74).

By Ms. COLLINS, from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 2577. An act making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–75).

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment and with a preamble:

S. Res. 204. A resolution recognizing June 20, 2015 as ''World Refugee Day''.

S. Res. 207. A resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments and an amendment to the title and with a preamble:

S. Res. 211. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Srebrenica.

By Mr. CORKER, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with an amendment:

S. 1643. A bill to require a report on actions to secure the safety and security of dissidents housed at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. CORKER for the Committee on Foreign Relations.

*David Hale, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Nominee: David Hale.

Post: Islamabad.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: N/A.

3. Children and Spouses: N/A.

4. Parents: Marjorie Freeman, $25, 5/20/10, RNC; $25, 2/19/12, RNC; $10, 4/12/12, RNC; $20, 8/15/12, RNC; $20, 9/21/12, RNC; $20, 9/27/13, RNC; $50, 4/8/14, RNC; $100, 6/30/14, RNC; $25, 9/27/12, Romney Victory Fund.

5. Grandparents: N/A.

6. Brothers and Spouses: John Hale, $50, 4/25/11, Bridgewaterepublican Municipal Committee.

7. Sisters and Spouses: $50, 4/26/13, Same.

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*Atul Keshap, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Maldives.

Nominee: Atul Keshap.

Post: Colombo, Sri Lanka.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: n/a.

2. Spouse: Karen Young Keshap: n/a.

3. Children and Spouses (all unmarried minor children): n/a.

4. Parents: Zoe Antoinette Calvert (mother), n/a; Dr. Keshap Chander Sen, Ph.D. (father—deceased 2008: n/a.

5. Grandparents: Chaudhry Bhawani Das Arora (deceased 1965): n/a; Chinko Bhai Sachdeva (deceased 1991): n/a; Richard Creagh Mackubin Calvert (deceased 1968): n/a; Margaret Taylor Calvert (deceased 2003): n/a.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Kiran Keshap (unmarried): n/a; Arun Keshap (unmarried): n/a; Rahul and Rochelle Keshap: $500, 03/14/2010, Thomas Perriello; $100, 08/10/2010, Thomas Perriello.

7. Sisters and Spouses: No sisters.

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*Alaina B. Teplitz, of Illinois, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

Nominee: Alaina Beth Teplitz.

Post: Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: none.

2. Spouse: N/A (and none prior to divorce).

3. Children and Spouses: Maximilien Mellott, none; Miles Mellott, none.

4. Parents: Marsha Neece, none; Jack Teplitz, please see attached; Marcella Teplitz, none.

5. Grandparents: Thomas Freeman, none; Janis Freeman, none.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Nathan Teplitz, none.

7. Sisters and Spouses: N/A.

Jack Teplitz, Political Donations—Jan. 1, 2010–Sep. 11, 2014

Date, description, amount:

2010

02/24/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 100.00.
03/23/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 50.00.
06/29/10, Democratic National Committee, 50.00.
09/03/10, Democratic National Committee, 25.00.
09/28/10, Democratic National Committee, 25.00.
10/12/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 90.00.
10/28/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 10.00.
10/28/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 75.00.
10/31/10, Democratic National Committee, Barack Obama, 5.00.
Total 2010: 430.00.

2011

01/21/11, Citizens for Grayeb (Peoria City Council), 100.00.
02/16/11, Friends of Chuck Weaver (Peoria City Council), 50.00.
06/30/11, Obama for America, 100.00.
08/11/11, Obama for America, 100.00.
09/06/11, Citizens for Koehler (IL State Senate), 100.00.
11/01/11, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, 50.00.
12/01/11, Committee to Elect Kate Gorman (IL Circuit Court Judge), 100.00.
12/29/11, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, 50.00.
Total 2011: 650.00.

2012

05/04/12, Obama for America, 25.00.
08/21/12, ActBlue*Donate to Dems, 38.50.
09/06/12, Obama Victory Fund, 150.00.
09/07/12, Obama Victory Fund, 100.00.
09/28/12, ActBlue*DCCC-House Democrats, 55.00.
10/11/12, Friends of Dave Koehler (IL State Senate), 100.00.
Total 2012: 468.50.

2013

01/31/13, Chuck Grayeb for Council (Peoria City Council), 200.00.
Total 2013: 200.00.

2014

08/07/14, ActBlue*Cheri Bustos (US Rep from IL), 50.00.
Total 2014: 50.00.

Black Heron, LLC, Political Donations—Jan. 1, 2010–Sep. 11, 2014

Date, description, amount:

2010

10/06/10, Batavians Against Debt, 9,233.13.
10/13/10, Batavians Against Debt, 8,156.44.
10/21/10, Batavians Against Debt, 9,000.00.
10/28/10, Batavians Against Debt, 6,755.74.
12/08/10, Batavians Against Debt, 17,394.16.
Total 2010: 50,539.47.

2011

02/03/11, Batavians Against Debt, 400.00.
02/18/11, Batavians Against Debt, 5,462.00.
Total 2011: 5,862.00.

These were contributions to a group in Batavia, IL that was opposed to a Park District referendum which wanted authority to construct a multi-million dollar fitness center. This facility would have had an adverse effect on one of my fathers most substantial clients. The contributions were made by Black Heron, LLC, a company he formed and for which he was the sole owner/member.

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*William A. Heidt, of Pennsylvania, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Cambodia.

Nominee: William A. Heidt.

Post: Cambodia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: Sotie Kenmano Heidt, None.

3. Children and Spouses: Allen Soriya Heidt, None.

4. Parents: Robert E. Heidt—deceased; Audrey C. Heidt—deceased.

5. Grandparents: William D. Heidt—deceased; Emma Heidt—deceased; Henry Weber—deceased; Myrtle Weber—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Stephen R. Heidt, $8,800, Various (2011–15), Hewlett Packard (Payroll deductions) Company PAC; Pam S. Knudsen, None; Kenneth R. Heidt—deceased; Lenny Heidt, None; John D. Heidt, None; Nicole Heidt, None; Paul E. Heidt, None; Carrie Heidt, None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: Catherine Savvas, $130, 2011, KeyCorp Advocate Fund; $130, 2012, KeyCorp Advocate Fund; $75 (est.), 2013, KeyCorp Advocate Fund; Savvas H. Savvas, $260, 2011, MWH PAC; $260, 2012, MWH PAC; $260, 2013, MWH PAC; $270, 2014, MWH PAC; $80, 2014, MWH PAC; Beth Praskwiecz, None; John Praskwiecz, None.

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*Glyn Townsend Davies, of the District of Columbia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.

Nominee: Glyn T. Davies.

Post: Bangkok, Thailand.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: None.

3. Children and Spouses: Ashley M. Springer (daughter): None; Chapin L. Springer (spouse): $100, 2009, Barack Obama; $50, 2012, DCCC; Theodora E. Davies (daughter): None.

4. Parents: Richard T. Davies—deceased; Jean S. Davies: None.

5. Grandparents: Wilmer E. Stevens—deceased; Alice H. Stevens—deceased; John Davies—deceased; Laura Davies—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: John S. Davies: None; Lou Michaels (spouse): None; Michael H. Davies: None; Stephen A. Davies: None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: None.

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*Jennifer Zimdahl Galt, of Colorado, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Mongolia.

Nominee: Jennifer Zimdahl Galt.

Post: Ambassador to Mongolia.

(The following is a list of all members of my immediate family and their spouses. I have asked each of these persons to inform me of the pertinent contributions made by them. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this report is complete and accurate.)

Contributions, amount, date, and donee:

1. Self: None.

2. Spouse: Frederick Mahler Galt: $250, 06/27/2012, Obama, Barack via Obama for America; $250, 06/27/2012, Obama Victory Fund 2012; $250, 09/1/2012, Obama, Barack via Obama for America.

3. Children and Spouses: Phoebe Anna Galt (no spouse): None; Dylan Chase Galt (no spouse): None.

4. Parents: Robert Lawrence Zimdahl: None; Ann Osborn Zimdahl (mother)—deceased; Pamela Jeanne McLean (née Lutz) Zimdahl (stepmother)—deceased; Karen Roney (née Johnson) Zimdahl (stepmother): None.

5. Grandparents: Clinton Morris Osborn—deceased; Catherine Ruth Osborn—deceased; Mildred Maria (née Lawrence) Zimdahl—deceased; Alfred Frank Zimdahl—deceased.

6. Brothers and Spouses: Randall Lawrence Zimdahl: None; Michelle Zimdahl (spouse): None; Robert Osborn Zimdahl (no spouse): None; Thomas Edward Zimdahl: None; Britt Meisenheimer (marriage 9/20/2014): None.

7. Sisters and Spouses: n/a.

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*Brian James Egan, of Maryland, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State.

*Janet L. Yellen, of California, to be United States Alternate Governor of the International Monetary Fund for a term of five years.

By Mr. THUNE for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*Coast Guard nomination of Brian J. Maggi, to be Lieutenant Commander.

*Coast Guard nominations beginning with Anna W. Hickey and ending with Kimberly C. Young-Mclear, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 21, 2015.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1677. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to reinstate estate and generation-skipping taxes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOZMAN:

S. 1678. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 201 B Street in Perryville, Arkansas, as ''Harold George Bennett Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 1679. A bill to amend the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 to require that certain buildings and personal property be covered by flood insurance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 1680. A bill to improve the condition and performance of the national multimodal freight network, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 1681. A bill to criminalize the knowing use of commercial robocalls without the prior express written consent of the recipient, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 1682. A bill to extend the Iran Sanctions Act of 1996 and to require the Secretary of the Treasury to report on the use by Iran of funds made available through sanctions relief; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mrs. ERNST, and Mr. BLUNT):

S. 1683. A bill to provide for the establishment of a process for the review of rules and sets of rules, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. 1684. A bill to amend the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 to provide for liability protection for organizations and entities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1685. A bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to extend to private land use restrictions its rule relating to reasonable accommodation of amateur service communications; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. WARREN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1686. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the proper tax treatment of personal service income earned in pass-thru entities; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1687. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restrict the insurance business exception to passive foreign investment company rules; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. WARREN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. REID, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 1688. A bill to provide for the admission of the State of New Columbia into the Union; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BROWN:

S. 1689. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, to reduce the funding available for a State under the national highway performance program and the surface transportation program if the State issues a license plate that contains an image of a flag of the Confederate States of America, including the Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1690. A bill to establish the Mountains to Sound Greenway National Heritage Area in the State of Washington; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 1691. A bill to expedite and prioritize forest management activities to achieve ecosystem restoration objectives, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 1692. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to clarify the use of a towaway trailer transportation combination, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Ms. HIRONO:

S. 1693. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for reimbursement for emergency medical treatment to certain veterans that were unable to receive care from the Department of Veterans Affairs in the 24-month period preceding the furnishing of such emergency treatment, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 1694. A bill to amend Public Law 103–434 to authorize Phase III of the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project for the purposes of improving water management in the Yakima River basin, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUNT:

S. 1695. An original bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. PERDUE):

S. 1696. A bill to redesignate the Ocmulgee National Monument in the State of Georgia, to revise the boundary of that monument, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1697. A bill to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BURR, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1698. A bill to exclude payments from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits; read the first time.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1699. A bill to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas and to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1700. A bill to require the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Chief of Engineers, to establish a program to provide loans and loan guarantees to enable eligible public entities to purchase credits from mitigation banks or in-lieu fee programs or acquire interests in real property that are acquired pursuant to mitigation projects required under certain Federal Water Pollution Control Act permits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1701. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to modify a provision relating to discharges of dredged or fill material into navigable waters at specified disposal sites; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. LEAHY, and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 1702. A bill to require the administering authority to determine an individual countervailable subsidy rate upon request if four or fewer exporters and producers are involved in the investigation or review, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL:

S. 1703. A bill to direct the Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to carry out a collaborative research effort to prevent drunk driving injuries and fatalities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. ENZI:

S.J. Res. 17. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to give States the right to repeal Federal laws and regulations when ratified by the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. Res. 214. A resolution commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Daughters of Penelope, a preeminent international women's association and an affiliate organization of

the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. HELLER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. TESTER, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 215. A resolution designating the month of June 2015 as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month'' and June 27, 2015, as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day''; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. Res. 216. A resolution recognizing the month of June 2015 as ''Immigrant Heritage Month'', a celebration of the accomplishments and contributions immigrants and their children have made in shaping the history, strengthening the economy, and enriching the culture of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 139

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 139, a bill to permanently allow an exclusion under the Supplemental Security Income program and the Medicaid program for compensation provided to individuals who participate in clinical trials for rare diseases or conditions.

S. 439

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 439, a bill to end discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity in public schools, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 697

At the request of Mr. UDALL, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 697, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

S. 804

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 804, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to specify coverage of continuous glucose monitoring devices, and for other purposes.

S. 890

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 890, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 957

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 957, a bill to increase access to capital for veteran entrepreneurs to help create jobs.

S. 987

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 987, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow deductions and credits relating to expenditures in connection with marijuana sales conducted in compliance with State law.

S. 1016

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, his name was withdrawn as a cosponsor of S. 1016, a bill to preserve freedom and choice in health care.

S. 1140

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1140, a bill to require the Secretary of the Army and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to propose a regulation revising the definition of the term ''waters of the United States'', and for other purposes.

S. 1250

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1250, a bill to encourage States to require the installation of residential carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and for other purposes.

S. 1403

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1403, a bill to amend the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to promote sustainable conservation and management for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic fisheries and the communities that rely on them, and for other purposes.

S. 1438

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1438, a bill to allow women greater access to safe and effective contraception.

S. 1495

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1495, a bill to curtail the use of changes in mandatory programs affecting the Crime Victims Fund to inflate spending.

S. 1512

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1512, a bill to eliminate discrimination and promote women's health and economic security by ensuring reasonable workplace accommodations for workers whose ability to perform the functions of a job are limited by pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition.

S. 1513

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1513, a bill to reauthorize the Second Chance Act of 2007.

S. 1538

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1538, a bill to reform the financing of Senate elections, and for other purposes.

S. 1580

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1580, a bill to allow additional appointing authorities to select individuals from competitive service certificates.

S. 1591

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1591, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide a pathway for temporary seasonal employees in Federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes.

S. 1603

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1603, a bill to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers.

S. 1632

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1632, a bill to require a regional strategy to address the threat posed by Boko Haram.

S. 1641

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1641, a bill to improve the use by the Department of Veterans Affairs of opioids in treating veterans, to improve patient advocacy by the Department, and to expand availability of

complementary and integrative health, and for other purposes.

S. 1643

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1643, a bill to require a report on actions to secure the safety and security of dissidents housed at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

S. 1659

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1659, a bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1676

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1676, a bill to increase the number of graduate medical education positions treating veterans, to improve the compensation of health care providers, medical directors, and directors of Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 207

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 207, a resolution recognizing threats to freedom of the press and expression around the world and reaffirming freedom of the press as a priority in efforts of the United States Government to promote democracy and good governance.

S. RES. 211

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 211, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding Srebrenica.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1687. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to restrict the insurance business exception to passive foreign investment company rules; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act. This bill closes a tax loophole that is being used by some U.S.-based hedge funds that set up insurance companies in places like Bermuda and the Cayman Islands where they aren't taxed and where their earnings are sheltered from U.S. taxes. Offshore businesses that reinsure risks and that invest in U.S. hedge funds create the potential for tax avoidance of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Under these arrangements, a hedge fund or hedge fund investors make a capital investment in an offshore reinsurance company. The offshore reinsurance company then reinvests that capital, as well as premiums it receives, in the hedge fund. The owners of the reinsurer take the position that they are not taxed on corporate earnings until either those earnings are distributed, or the investors sell the corporation's stock at a gain reflecting those earnings.

However, the hedge fund ''reinsurers'' are taking advantage of an exception to the passive foreign investment company—or PFIC—rules of U.S. tax law. The PFIC rules are designed to prevent U.S. taxpayers from delaying U.S. tax on investment income by holding investments through offshore corporations. However, the PFIC rules provide an exception for income derived from the active conduct of an insurance business. The exception applies to income derived from the active conduct of an insurance business by a corporation which is predominantly engaged in an insurance business and which would be subject to tax under Subchapter L if it were a domestic corporation.

Current law does not prescribe how much insurance or reinsurance business the company must do to be considered predominantly engaged in an insurance business. Our investigative efforts show that some companies that are not legitimate insurance companies are taking advantage of this favorable tax treatment.

About a year ago I asked the Treasury Department and IRS to issue guidance to shut down this abuse. And in April, Treasury and IRS issued regulations that take a first step at addressing this issue. However, while the guidance offers clarity in this area, a legislative fix is required to fully close this loophole.

Therefore, today I am introducing the Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act to shut down this abuse once and for all. My bill would provide a brightline test for determining whether a company is truly an insurance company for purposes of the exception to the PFIC rules.

Under the new rule, to be considered an insurance company, the company's insurance liabilities must exceed 25 percent of its assets. If the company fails to qualify because it has 25 percent or less—but not less than 10 percent—in insurance liability assets, the company may still be predominantly engaged in the insurance business based on facts and circumstances. A company with less than 10 percent of insurance liability assets will not be considered an insurance company and, therefore, would be ineligible for the PFIC exception and subject to current taxation.

The Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act will disqualify most of the hedge fund reinsurance companies that are taking advantage of the current law loophole, making them ineligible for the PFIC exception and stopping this abuse. I look forward to working with my colleagues to enact this important reform.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill and a technical explanation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 1687

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act''.

SEC. 2. RESTRICTION ON INSURANCE BUSINESS EXCEPTION TO PASSIVE FOREIGN INVESTMENT COMPANY RULES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1297(b)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(B) derived in the active conduct of an insurance business by a qualifying insurance corporation (as defined in subsection (f)),''.

(b) QUALIFYING INSURANCE CORPORATION DEFINED.—Section 1297 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(f) QUALIFYING INSURANCE CORPORATION.—For purposes of subsection (b)(2)(B)—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'qualifying insurance corporation' means, with respect to any taxable year, a foreign corporation—

''(A) which would be subject to tax under subchapter L if such corporation were a domestic corporation, and

''(B) the applicable insurance liabilities of which constitute more than 25 percent of its total assets, determined on the basis of such liabilities and assets as reported on the corporation's applicable financial statement for the last year ending with or within the taxable year.

''(2) ALTERNATIVE FACTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES TEST FOR CERTAIN CORPORATIONS.—If a corporation fails to qualify as a qualified insurance corporation under paragraph (1) solely because the percentage determined under paragraph (1)(B) is 25 percent or less, a United States person that owns stock in such corporation may elect to treat such stock as stock of a qualifying insurance corporation if—

''(A) the percentage so determined for the corporation is at least 10 percent, and

''(B) under regulations provided by the Secretary, based on the applicable facts and circumstances—

''(i) the corporation is predominantly engaged in an insurance business, and

''(ii) such failure is due solely to temporary circumstances involving such insurance business.

''(3) APPLICABLE INSURANCE LIABILITIES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The term 'applicable insurance liabilities' means, with respect to any life or property and casualty insurance business—

''(i) loss and loss adjustment expenses, and

''(ii) reserves (other than deficiency, contingency, or unearned premium reserves) for life and health insurance risks and life and health insurance claims with respect to contracts providing coverage for mortality or morbidity risks.

''(B) LIMITATIONS ON AMOUNT OF LIABILITIES.—Any amount determined under clause (i) or (ii) of subparagraph (A) shall not exceed the lesser of such amount—

''(i) as reported to the applicable insurance regulatory body in the applicable financial statement described in paragraph (4)(A) (or, if less, the amount required by applicable law or regulation), or

''(ii) as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

''(4) OTHER DEFINITIONS AND RULES.—For purposes of this subsection—

''(A) APPLICABLE FINANCIAL STATEMENT.—The term 'applicable financial statement' means a statement for financial reporting purposes which—

''(i) is made on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles,

''(ii) is made on the basis of international financial reporting standards, but only if there is no statement that meets the requirement of clause (i), or

''(iii) except as otherwise provided by the Secretary in regulations, is the annual statement which is required to be filed with the applicable insurance regulatory body, but only if there is no statement which meets the requirements of clause (i) or (ii).

''(B) APPLICABLE INSURANCE REGULATORY BODY.—The term 'applicable insurance regulatory body' means, with respect to any insurance business, the entity established by law to license, authorize, or regulate such business and to which the statement described in subparagraph (A) is provided.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

TECHNICAL EXPLANATION OF THE OFFSHORE REINSURANCE TAX FAIRNESS ACT INTRODUCED BY SENATOR WYDEN ON JUNE 25, 2015

PRESENT LAW

Passive foreign investment companies

A U.S. person who is a shareholder of a passive foreign investment company (''PFIC'') is subject to U.S. tax in respect to that person's share of the PFIC's income under one of three alternative anti-deferral regimes. A PFIC generally is defined as any foreign corporation if 75 percent or more of its gross income for the taxable year consists of passive income, or 50 percent or more of its assets consists of assets that produce, or are held for the production of, passive income. Alternative sets of income inclusion rules apply to U.S. persons that are shareholders in a PFIC, regardless of their percentage ownership in the company. One set of rules applies to passive foreign investment companies that are ''qualified electing funds,'' under which electing U.S. shareholders currently include in gross income their respective shares of the company's earnings, with a separate election to defer payment of tax, subject to an interest charge, on income not currently received. A second set of rules applies to passive foreign investment companies that are not qualified electing funds, under which U.S. shareholders pay tax on certain income or gain realized through the company, plus an interest charge that is attributable to the value of deferral. A third set of rules applies to PFIC stock that is marketable, under which electing U.S. shareholders currently take into account as income (or loss) the difference between the fair market value of the stock as of the close of the taxable year and their adjusted basis in such stock (subject to certain limitations), often referred to as ''marking to market.''

Passive income

Passive income means any income which is of a kind that would be foreign personal holding company income, including dividends, interest, royalties, rents, and certain gains on the sale or exchange of property, commodities, or foreign currency.

However, among other exceptions, passive income does not include any income derived in the active conduct of an insurance business by a corporation that is predominantly engaged in an insurance business and that would be subject to tax under subchapter L if it were a domestic corporation.

In Notice 2003–34, the Internal Revenue Service identified issues in applying the insurance exception under the PFIC rules. One issue involves whether risks assumed under contracts issued by a foreign company organized as an insurer are truly insurance risks, and whether the risks are limited under the terms of the contracts. In the Notice, the Service also analyzed the status of the company as an insurance company. The Service looked to Treasury Regulations issued in 1960 and last amended in 1972, as well as to the statutory definition of an insurance company and to the case law. The question to resolve in determining a company's status as an insurance company is whether ''the character of all of the business actually done by [the company] . . . indicate[s] whether [the company] uses its capital and efforts primarily in investing rather than primarily in the insurance business.'' The Notice concluded that ''[t]he Service will scrutinize these arrangements and will apply the PFIC rules where it determines that [a company] is not an insurance company for federal tax purposes.''

Proposed regulations on the insurance exception under the PFIC rules published on April 24, 2015, provide that ''the term insurance business means the business of issuing insurance and annuity contracts and the reinsuring of risks underwritten by insurance companies, together with those investment activities and administrative services that are required to support or are substantially related to insurance and annuity contracts issued or reinsured by the foreign corporation.'' The proposed regulations provide that an investment activity is an activity producing foreign personal holding company income, and that is ''required to support or [is] substantially related to insurance and annuity contracts issued or reinsured by the foreign corporation to the extent that income from the activities is earned from assets held by the foreign corporation to meet obligations under the contracts.''

The preamble to the proposed regulations specifically requests comments on the proposed regulations ''with regard to how to determine the portion of a foreign insurance company's assets that are held to meet obligations under insurance contracts issued or reinsured by the company,'' for example, if the assets ''do not exceed a specified percentage of the corporation's total insurance liabilities for the year.''

REASONS FOR CHANGE

The establishment of offshore businesses that reinsure risks and that invest in U.S. hedge funds has been characterized as creating the potential for tax avoidance. In these arrangements, a hedge fund or hedge fund investors make a capital investment in an offshore reinsurance company. The offshore reinsurance company then reinvests that capital (as well as premiums it receives) as reserves in the hedge fund. Because the capital may be held largely or completely in one investment (the hedge fund), an insurance regulator may require a higher level of reserves to compensate for the lack of diversification. This can magnify the effect of holding a high level of reserves relative to a low level of insurance liabilities.

The owners of the offshore reinsurance company take the position that the reinsurance company is not a PFIC, and that investors in it are not taxed on its earnings until those earnings are distributed or the investors sell the reinsurance company stock at a gain reflecting those earnings. U.S. PFIC rules designed to prevent tax deferral through offshore corporations provide an exception for income derived in the active conduct of an insurance business. What it takes to qualify under this exception as an insurance business, including how much insurance or reinsurance business the company must do to qualify under the exception, may not be completely clear.

The hedge fund reinsurance arrangement is said to provide indefinite deferral of U.S. taxation of the hedge fund's investment earnings, such as interest and dividends. At the time the taxpayer chooses to liquidate the investment, ordinary investment earnings are said to be converted to capital gains, which are subject to a lower rate of tax. The use of offshore reinsurance companies allows large-scale investments that are said to be consistent with capital and reserve requirements applicable to the insurance and reinsurance business.

Media attention to hedge fund reinsurance has described the practice as dating from an arrangement set up in 1999. In recent years, the practice has grown, giving rise to a serious income mismeasurement problem. The ''Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act'' seeks to prevent this income mismeasurement by modifying the definition of an insurance company for purposes of the PFIC rules. The ''Offshore Reinsurance Tax Fairness Act'' provides that objective measures of a firm's real insurance risks compared to its assets are used to determine whether a firm is an insurance company, or is a disguise cloaking untaxed offshore income.

EXPLANATION OF PROVISION

Applicable insurance liabilities as a percentage of total assets

Under the provision, passive income for purposes of the PFIC rules does not include income derived in the active conduct of an insurance business by a corporation (1) that would be subject to tax under subchapter L if it were a domestic corporation; and (2) the applicable insurance liabilities of which constitute more than 25 percent of its total assets as reported on the company's applicable financial statement for the last year ending with or within the taxable year.

For the purpose of the provision's exception from passive income, applicable insurance liabilities means, with respect to any property and casualty or life insurance business (1) loss and loss adjustment expenses, (2) reserves (other than deficiency, contingency, or unearned premium reserves) for life and health insurance risks and life and health insurance claims with respect to contracts providing coverage for mortality or morbidity risks. This includes loss reserves for property and casualty, life, and health insurance contracts and annuity contracts. Unearned premium reserves with respect to any type of risk are not treated as applicable insurance liabilities for purposes of the provision. For purposes of the provision, the amount of any applicable insurance liability may not exceed the lesser of such amount (1) as reported to the applicable insurance regulatory body in the applicable financial statement (or, if less, the amount required by applicable law or regulation), or (2) as determined under regulations prescribed by the Secretary.

An applicable financial statement is a statement for financial reporting purposes that (1) is made on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles, (2) is made on the basis of international financial reporting standards, but only if there is no statement made on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles, or (3) except as otherwise provided by the Secretary in regulations, is the annual statement required to be filed with the applicable insurance regulatory body, but only if there is no statement made on either of the foregoing bases. Unless otherwise provided in regulations, it is intended that generally accepted accounting principles means U.S. GAAP.

The applicable insurance regulatory body means, with respect to any insurance business, the entity established by law to license, authorize, or regulate such insurance business and to which the applicable financial statement is provided. For example, in the United States, the applicable insurance regulatory body is the State insurance regulator to which the corporation provides its annual statement.

Election to apply alternative test in certain circumstances

If a corporation fails to qualify solely because its applicable insurance liabilities constitute 25 percent or less of its total assets, a United States person who owns stock of the corporation may elect in such manner as the Secretary prescribes to treat the stock as stock of a qualifying insurance corporation if (1) the corporation's applicable insurance liabilities constitute at least 10 percent of its total assets, and (2) based on the applicable facts and circumstances, the corporation is predominantly engaged in an insurance business, and its failure to qualify under the 25 percent threshold is due solely to temporary circumstances involving such insurance business.

Whether the corporation's applicable insurance liabilities constitute at least 10 percent of its total assets is determined in the same manner as whether the corporation's applicable insurance liabilities constitute more than 25 percent of its total assets.

In determining whether the corporation is predominantly engaged in an insurance business, relevant facts and circumstances under this election include: the number of insurance contracts issued or taken on through reinsurance by the firm; the amount of insurance liabilities (determined as above) with respect to such contracts; the total assets of the firm (determined as above); information with respect to claims payment patterns for the current and prior years; the nature of risks underwritten and the data available on likelihood of the risk occurring (extremely low-risk but extremely high cost risks are less indicative of being engaged in an insurance business); the firm's loss exposure as calculated for a regulator such as the SEC or for a rating agency, or if those are not calculated, for internal pricing purposes; the percentage of gross receipts constituting premiums for the current and prior years; whether the firm makes substantial expenditures during the taxable year with respect to marketing or soliciting new insurance or reinsurance business; and such other facts or circumstances as the Secretary may prescribe.

Facts and circumstances that tend to show the firm may not be predominantly engaged in an insurance business include a small number of insured risks with low likelihood but large potential costs; workers focused to a greater degree on investment activities than underwriting activities; and low loss exposure. The fact that a firm has been holding itself out as an insurer for a long period is not determinative either way.

Temporary circumstances include the fact that the company is in runoff, that is, it is not taking on new insurance business (and consequently has little or no premium income), and is using its remaining assets to pay off claims with respect to pre-existing insurance risks on its books. Temporary circumstances may also include specific requirements with respect to capital and surplus relating to insurance liabilities imposed by a rating agency as a condition of obtaining a rating necessary to write new insurance business for the current year.

Temporary circumstances do not refer to starting up an insurance business; the present-law PFIC rules include a special start-up year rule under which a foreign corporation that would be a PFIC under the income or assets test will not be considered a PFIC in the first year in which it has gross income if, among other requirements, the corporation is not a PFIC in either of the two following years. This start-up year exception to status as a PFIC applies broadly to all foreign corporations including those in the insurance business.

EFFECTIVE DATE

The provision applies to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2015.

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1697. A bill to provide an exception from certain group health plan requirements to allow small businesses to use pre-tax dollars to assist employees in the purchase of policies in the individual health insurance market, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, over the past year and half or more, many small business owners have discovered they could be subject to punitive penalties simply for helping their employees purchase health insurance. This is the result of a little understood provision in the Affordable Care Act, ACA.

Farmers, ranchers, and small business owners frequently do not have the resources to offer a traditional group health plan to their employees. However, many still want to help their employees obtain health coverage. They have frequently done this by reimbursing their employees on a pre-tax basis for the cost of health insurance the employee purchases on the individual market.

However, as a result of so-called market reforms in the ACA, small business owners who want to help their employees purchase insurance on the individual market could be subject to a $100 a day per employee penalty.

This fails to meet the common sense test. These businesses have no obligation under the ACA to offer any form of insurance. However, they would like to do what they can to help their employees obtain coverage. This is a practice that should be commended, not penalized.

I have had a number of farmers, small business owners, and accountants reach out to me over the past year explaining how this penalty has the potential to be devastating. Just as examples, I want to read excerpts from a couple emails I have received from Iowans.

The first is from a constituent who is a dentist in Sioux City, IA:

Help! . . . I am a small business owner—7 employees. I have been helping to subsidize my employee's health insurance for 20 years. I just found out that the Market Reforms of the ACA have made that illegal. . . . Now all of my employees will have to pay taxes on the money I gave them for Health Insurance. They all live paycheck to paycheck and won't be able to come up with the taxes on this money. They also most likely won't qualify for the exchanges and any government subsidy. They are caught in the middle. I can't subsidize their Health Insurance because I risk a $100/day/employee penalty . . . Please hurry and do something to help the millions of middle class small business employees who are caught between a rock and a hard place.

This next one is from an accountant in Zwingle, IA:

I recently completed two classes for CPE credit for my CPA license. These classes covered the Affordable Care Act and the presenters were adamant that we contact our senators and representatives on behalf of small businesses. I do have a client that this affects that could potentially be put out of business.

Businesses that have section 105 plans or that provide additional salary to employees for the employees to purchase health insurance privately or through the government marketplace can be fined $100 per day per employee. That is $36,500 per employee per year!

I'm trying to help my client to figure out how to stop the payments to the employees and not be destroyed by the potential fines. This could be absolutely devastating.

No doubt, there are countless other small business owners who have similarly been caught off guard. In fact, due to widespread confusion, the IRS granted penalty relief earlier this year. However, this penalty relief runs out at the end of this month. Legislation is necessary to eliminate this unfair and potentially devastating penalty once and for all.

Toward this end, I have been working with Senator HEITKAMP, along with Representatives CHARLES BOUSTANY and MIKE THOMPSON in the House, on bipartisan, bicameral legislation. Today, we are pleased to introduce this legislation.

This common sense legislation will permit small businesses to continue offering a benefit to their employees that many have provided for years—namely reimbursing their employees for the cost of health insurance purchased on the individual market.

According to the National Federation of Independent Business, around 18 percent of small businesses last year reimbursed employees or provided other financial support to workers who bought individual insurance plans. Many others responded that they would be interested in such an option. Our legislation ensures this option is, and continues to be, available by eliminating the potential for devastating penalties.

This legislation should be a no brainer for anyone who supports small business. I hope that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join in this effort.

By Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. CARPER, Mr. BURR, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 1698. A bill to exclude payments from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits; read the first time.

Mr. TILLIS. Mr. President, I am introducing the Treatment of Certain Payments in Eugenics Compensation Act, which would exclude payments

from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits. My colleagues, Senator RICHARD BURR, Senator TOM CARPER, Senator TIM KAINE, and Senator MARK WARNER have agreed to cosponsor the bill. In addition, Congressman PATRICK MCHENRY will introduce a companion bill in the House of Representatives.

A dark chapter in American history, eugenics and compulsory sterilization laws were implemented in the first decades of the 20th century by more than 30 States, leading to the forced sterilization of more than 60,000 disabled citizens. Only California and Virginia sterilized more citizens than North Carolina under these laws, though North Carolina was considered as having the most aggressive State-run program.

In 2013, North Carolina became the first State in the country to enact legislation to compensate living victims of these forced-sterilization laws. Most of the victims of the State-run eugenics program were poor and disadvantaged individuals and many remain so to this day. Therefore, concerns have been raised in both States that the compensation provided to the victims could unintentionally render them ineligible under Federal law to continue receiving Federal benefits that are subject to income thresholds. The bill introduced today would specifically exclude all payments from any State eugenics compensation program from being used in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, any public benefits from the Federal government.

The implementation of State-run eugenics and sterilization programs represent a dark and shameful chapter in our Nation's history. While North Carolina and Virginia have recently created State compensation programs to help victims recover from horrible wrongs that have been perpetrated against them in the past, Federal laws can unintentionally punish victims who receive eugenics compensation by preventing them from receiving Federal benefits. This bipartisan legislation will ensure that will not happen.

I wish to offer a special, much deserved thank you to my friend and former colleague, North Carolina State representative Larry Womble, who has provided extraordinary leadership in the decades-long fight for justice for the living victims of North Carolina's eugenics program.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1699. A bill to designate certain land administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service in the State of Oregon as wilderness and national recreation areas and to make additional wild and scenic river designations in the State of Oregon, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am introducing the Oregon Wildlands Act to designate hundreds of miles of Oregon Rivers as Wild and Scenic, to protect thousands of acres of beautiful Oregon lands as National Recreation Areas, and to expand Wilderness for some of Oregon's most treasured areas.

Oregon is a unique State and Oregonians take pride in the many natural treasures throughout our diverse landscape. From the Oregon Coast to the high desert of Eastern Oregon, our State boasts some of the most beautiful scenery, varied ecosystems, and unmatched outdoor recreation opportunities in the nation. Protecting these lands and rivers ensures that they will be treasured for generations to come. Oregon's rivers and landscapes are also home to threatened and endangered species, old-growth trees, and delicate ecosystems that deserve the highest protections.

Enjoying the outdoors is in Oregonians' DNA—across the State, opportunities to get outside and enjoy Oregon's treasures bring in visitors from all over the world and make residents proud to call Oregon home. Protecting the lands and waters that support recreation is also an investment in our rural economies. In Oregon alone, the tourism industry employed more than 100,000 Oregonians during 2014 and generated $10.3 billion for the State's economy. Nationwide, outdoor recreation supports a $646 billion industry. Ensuring that visitors have pristine rivers to fish and float on, wilderness areas to hike in, and recreation areas to explore is a guaranteed way to make certain that visitors will return year after year.

All told, the bill designates approximately 118,000 acres of Recreation Areas, approximately 250 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, and over 86,600 acres of Wilderness. Each area offers significant opportunities for recreation and ecosystem protections.

The protections in this bill highlight some of Oregon's most environmentally significant areas, such as Devil's Staircase near the Oregon Coast. Devil's Staircase is the epitome of Wilderness in Oregon—it is rugged, pristine, and remote, with hikers following elk and deer trails to navigate the rugged terrain. My bill would protect approximately 30,540 acres as wilderness and 14.6 miles of Wasson Creek and Franklin Creek, which run through the Devil's Staircase area as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Devil's Staircase is home to the most remarkable old-growth forest on Oregon's Coast Range, where giant Douglas-fir, cedar, and hemlock support threatened and endangered species habitat, such as marbled murrelets and Northern Spotted Owls.

My proposal would expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness by approximately 56,100 acres and include an additional 125 miles to the incomparable Wild and Scenic Rogue River. The Rogue is world-renowned as a premier recreation destination for rafting and fishing, with its free flowing waters starting at Oregon's Crater Lake National Park and emptying into the Pacific Ocean. Along the way, the Rogue River flows through a diverse landscape and its cold waters are the perfect habitat for salmon—the river is home to runs of Coho, spring and fall Chinook, and winter and summer Steelhead. By protecting the Rogue River and its tributaries we are protecting the fish and wildlife that depend on clean, healthy water. Additionally, the Wilderness expansion would protect the habitat for bald eagles, osprey, spotted owls, bear, elk, and cougars.

In addition, my proposal designates approximately 35.2 miles of the Elk River and 21.3 miles of the Molalla River as a new recreational, scenic, and wild rivers, and withdraws 19 miles of the Chetco River, one of the most endangered rivers in the country, from mineral development. By protecting hundreds of miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers, as well as the lands that surround those rivers, my proposal ensures that important wildlife habitat can thrive, that Oregon's treasured recreation destinations remain scenic and pristine, and that Oregonians continue to have clean sources of drinking water.

I am pleased to be joined on this bill by my colleague from Oregon Senator JEFF MERKLEY who has worked closely with me over the years to protect Oregon's natural treasures.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 214—COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF PENELOPE, A PREEMINENT INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION AND AN AFFILIATE ORGANIZATION OF THE AMERICAN HELLENIC EDUCATIONAL PROGRESSIVE ASSOCIATION

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 214

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope is a leading international organization of women of Hellenic descent and of Philhellenes, that was founded on November 16, 1929 in San Francisco, California, to improve the status and well-being of women and their families and to provide women the opportunity to make significant contributions to their communities and country;

Whereas the mission of the Daughters of Penelope is to promote philanthropy, education, civic responsibility, good citizenship, family and individual excellence, and the ideals of ancient Greece, through community service and volunteerism;

Whereas Daughters of Penelope chapters sponsor affordable and dignified housing to the senior citizen population of the United States by participating in the supportive housing for the elderly program established under section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12 U.S.C. 1701q);

Whereas Penelope House, a domestic violence shelter for women and their children

sponsored by the Daughters of Penelope in Mobile, Alabama, is the first of its kind in the State of Alabama and is recognized as a model shelter for others to emulate throughout the United States;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope also sponsors Penelope's Place, a domestic violence shelter in Brockton, Massachusetts;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope Foundation, Inc. supports the educational objectives of the Daughters of Penelope by providing tens of thousands of dollars annually for scholarships, sponsoring educational seminars, and donating children's books to libraries, schools, shelters, and churches through the Penelope's Books program;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope is the first ethnic organization to submit to the Library of Congress oral history tapes, which provide an oral history of first generation Greek American women in the United States;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope promotes awareness of and provides financial support to charitable organizations, including the University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center (formerly the Papanicolaou Cancer Center), the Alzheimer's Foundation, and the American Heart Association;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope also promotes awareness of and provides financial support to medical research for breast cancer and other cancers, Thalassemia (also known as Cooley's Anemia), Lymphangioleiomyomatosis, and Muscular Dystrophy;

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope provides support and financial assistance to victims and communities affected by natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and forest fires; and

Whereas the Daughters of Penelope has supported and contributed to organizations such as the Special Olympics, the Barbara Bush Foundation for Literacy, the Children's Wish Foundation, UNICEF, Habitat for Humanity, St. Basil Academy, and countless other organizations that help families and communities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the significant contributions of American citizens of Greek ancestry and of Philhellenes to the United States; and

(2) commemorates the 85th anniversary of the Daughters of Penelope in 2015, applauds its mission, and commends the many charitable contributions of its members to organizations and communities worldwide.

SENATE RESOLUTION 215—DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015 AS ''NATIONAL POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH'' AND JUNE 27, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS DAY''

Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself, Mr. HELLER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MORAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. THUNE, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WARNER, Mr. DONNELLY, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. TESTER, Ms. HIRONO, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 215

Whereas the brave men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States, who proudly serve the United States, risk their lives to protect the freedom of the people of the United States, and deserve the investment of every possible resource to ensure their lasting physical, mental, and emotional well-being;

Whereas more than 2,000,000 members of the Armed Forces have deployed overseas since the events of September 11, 2001, and have served in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq;

Whereas the Armed Forces of the United States have sustained a historically high operational tempo since September 11, 2001, with many members of the Armed Forces deploying overseas multiple times, placing those members at high risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (referred to in this preamble as ''PTSD'');

Whereas men and women of the Armed Forces and veterans who served before September 11, 2001, remain at risk for PTSD and other mental health disorders;

Whereas the Secretary of Veterans Affairs reports that—

(1) since October 2001, more than 390,000 of the approximately 1,160,000 veterans of Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn who have received health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs have been diagnosed with PTSD;

(2) in fiscal year 2014, more than 531,000 of the nearly 6,000,000 veterans who sought care at a medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs received treatment for PTSD; and

(3) of veterans who served in Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn who are receiving health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs, more than 615,000 have received a diagnosis for at least 1 mental health disorder;

Whereas many cases of PTSD remain unreported, undiagnosed, and untreated due to a lack of awareness about PTSD and the persistent stigma associated with mental health conditions;

Whereas exposure to military trauma can lead to PTSD;

Whereas PTSD significantly increases the risk of anxiety, depression, suicide, homelessness, and drug- and alcohol-related disorders and deaths, especially if left untreated;

Whereas public perceptions of PTSD or other mental health disorders create unique challenges for veterans seeking employment;

Whereas the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs—as well as the larger medical community, both private and public—have made significant advances in the identification, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of PTSD and the symptoms of PTSD, but many challenges remain;

Whereas increased understanding of PTSD can help diminish the stigma attached to this mental health issue, and additional efforts are needed to find further ways to reduce this stigma—including an examination of how PTSD is discussed in the United States and a recognition that PTSD is a common injury that is treatable and repairable;

Whereas PTSD can result from any number of stressors other than combat, including rape, sexual assault, battery, torture, confinement, child abuse, car accidents, train wrecks, plane crashes, bombings, or natural disaster, and affects approximately 8,000,000 adults in the United States annually; and

Whereas the designation of a National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month and a National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Day will raise public awareness about issues related to PTSD, reduce the stigma associated with PTSD, and help ensure that those suffering from the invisible wounds of war receive proper treatment: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates June 2015 as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month'' and June 27, 2015 as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day'';

(2) supports the efforts of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense—as well as the entire medical community—to educate members of the Armed Forces, veterans, the families of members of the Armed Forces and veterans, and the public about the causes, symptoms, and treatment of PTSD;

(3) encourages commanders of the Armed Forces to support appropriate treatment of men and women of the Armed Forces who are diagnosed with PTSD; and

(4) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Defense.

SENATE RESOLUTION 216—RECOGNIZING THE MONTH OF JUNE 2015 AS ''IMMIGRANT HERITAGE MONTH'', A CELEBRATION OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN HAVE MADE IN SHAPING THE HISTORY, STRENGTHENING THE ECONOMY, AND ENRICHING THE CULTURE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 216

Whereas the United States has always been a nation of immigrants and throughout the history of the United States immigrants from around the globe and their children have—

(1) kept the workforce of the United States vibrant;

(2) kept the businesses of the United States on the cutting edge; and

(3) helped build the greatest economic engine in the world;

Whereas the entrepreneurial drive and spirit of the United States—

(1) is built on the diversity of the origins of the people of the United States;

(2) drew the first immigrants to the United States; and

(3) continues to drive business in the United States;

Whereas the success of the United States is a result of the many distinct experiences of the people of the United States, not in spite of those distinct experiences;

Whereas as a nation of immigrants, the people of the United States must remember the generations of pioneers that helped—

(1) lay railroads and build cities;

(2) develop new industries; and

(3) fuel the Information Age, from the telegraph to the smartphone;

Whereas more than 70 percent of agricultural workers in the United States are foreign born, and these workers keep California and farms in the United States in business and feed families in the United States;

Whereas immigrants start more than one-fourth of all new businesses in the United States and immigrants or their children start more than 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies;

Whereas those businesses collectively employ tens of millions of people in the United

States and generate more than $4,500,000,000,000 in annual revenue;

Whereas immigrants to the United States contribute greatly to advances in technology and sciences;

Whereas, as of the date of introduction of this resolution, 14 percent of employed college graduates and 50 percent of individuals with doctorate degrees working in mathematics and computer science occupations in the United States are immigrants;

Whereas between 2006 and 2012, 44 percent of new technology start-ups in Silicon Valley (widely known as the international hub for technological development and innovation) had at least 1 immigrant founder;

Whereas the work of immigrants has directly enriched the culture of the United States by influencing the performing arts (from Broadway to Hollywood), academia, art, music, literature, media, fashion, cuisine, customs, and cultural celebrations enjoyed across the United States;

Whereas generations of immigrants have come to the shores of the United States from all corners of the globe;

Whereas immigrants fought tirelessly in the Revolutionary War and continue to defend the ideals of the United States;

Whereas as of June 2015, more than 30,000 lawful permanent residents are serving in the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas between 2002 and 2015, more than 102,000 men and women, including individuals serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, South Korea, Germany, Japan, and elsewhere, have become United States citizens while wearing the uniform of the United States military;

Whereas Congress represents a rich diversity of communities across the United States and works closely with diaspora leaders from more than 60 ethnic caucuses to ensure that the voices of people of the United States of all backgrounds are heard; and

Whereas the United States was founded on the universal promise that all people are created equal: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes June 2015 as ''Immigrant Heritage Month'' in honor of the accomplishments and contributions of immigrants and their children in shaping the history and culture of the United States;

(2) pledges to celebrate immigrant contributions to, and immigrant heritage in, each State; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to commemorate the history of immigrants in the United States and to always remember the immigrant roots of the United States.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise to submit a resolution on Immigrant Heritage Month, which is recognized every June. This resolution honors the accomplishments and contributions of immigrants, pledges to celebrate our immigrant heritage, and joins the American people in commemorating our immigrant roots.

Since our founding, the United States has been a nation of immigrants. Immigrants from all over the world have sought to start anew in the United States. Whether they were seeking to practice their religious and political beliefs without interference or obtain new professional or educational opportunities, the United States has been a refuge for those seeking a better life.

We have benefited tremendously as a result. Immigrants have played a vital role in our Nation's history, shaping the economic, cultural, and social development of our society. Immigrants have helped build our nation's cities and railroads, developed some of our most cutting-edge businesses, and fueled inventions from the telegraph to the smartphone.

Individuals and families from Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, and the Americas have all contributed to our Nation's fabric, enhancing the diversity and vibrancy of our communities and forming the melting pot for which our country is known.

In addition, immigrants have defended our Nation since the Revolutionary War. As of this month, over 30,000 lawful permanent residents are currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. I imagine many more immigrants would join as well if they were afforded the opportunity. Between 2002 and 2015, more than 102,000 immigrants have become U.S. citizens while serving in the U.S. Military in Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, Japan, and elsewhere.

Our Nation's food supply also depends upon the work of immigrants. Over 70 percent of agricultural workers in the U.S. are foreign born. These workers help feed American families and support U.S. farms and businesses. Without their help, we would struggle to harvest our Nation's crops and feed our people.

Immigrants also have made impressive contributions in business and technology. Immigrants or children-of-immigrants have started more than 25 percent of all new businesses in the U.S., including more than 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies. These businesses have created tens of millions of American jobs, and they exceed over $4.5 trillion in revenue annually. In Silicon Valley, over 44 percent of technology startups had at least one immigrant founder between 2006 and 2012.

One of our country's greatest exports, our culture, has been enhanced by immigrants from all corners of the globe. From Broadway to Hollywood, our country's unique contributions in the performing arts, art, music, literature, media, fashion, and cuisine have been shaped by immigrants.

I urge my colleagues to join me in observing Immigrant Heritage Month to recognize the contributions of immigrants to the United States, as well as our nation's strong immigrant heritage.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2077. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 230, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2077. Mr. MCCONNELL (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 230, to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days, after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this Act as the ''Secretary'') shall convey to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska (referred to in this Act as the ''Corporation''), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the property described in section 2 for use in connection with health and social services programs.

(b) EFFECT ON ANY QUITCLAIM DEED.—The conveyance by the Secretary of title by warranty deed under this section shall, on the effective date of the conveyance, supersede and render of no future effect any quitclaim deed to the property described in section 2 executed by the Secretary and the Corporation.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance of the property under this Act—

(1) shall be made by warranty deed; and

(2) shall not—

(A) require any consideration from the Corporation for the property;

(B) impose any obligation, term, or condition on the Corporation; or

(C) allow for any reversionary interest of the United States in the property.

SEC. 2. PROPERTY DESCRIBED.

The property, including all land and appurtenances, described in this section is the property included in U.S. Survey No. 4000, Lot 2, T. 8 N., R. 71 W., Seward Meridian, containing 22.98 acres.

SEC. 3. ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY.

(a) LIABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Corporation shall not be liable for any soil, surface water, groundwater, or other contamination resulting from the disposal, release, or presence of any environmental contamination on any portion of the property described in section 2 on or before the date on which the property is conveyed to the Corporation.

(2) ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION.—An environmental contamination described in paragraph (1) includes any oil or petroleum products, hazardous substances, hazardous materials, hazardous waste, pollutants, toxic substances, solid waste, or any other environmental contamination or hazard as defined in any Federal or State of Alaska law.

(b) EASEMENT.—The Secretary shall be accorded any easement or access to the property conveyed under this Act as may be reasonably necessary to satisfy any retained obligation or liability of the Secretary.

(c) NOTICE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE ACTIVITY AND WARRANTY.—In carrying out this Act, the Secretary shall comply with subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 120(h)(3) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)(3)).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–G50 of the

Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Country of Origin Labeling and Trade Retaliation: What's at stake for America's Farmers, Ranchers, Businesses, and Consumers.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Unlocking the Private Sector: State Innovations in Financing Infrastructure.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Evaluating Key Components of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with Iran.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Under Attack: Federal Cybersecurity and the OPM Data Breach.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 9:45 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in SR–428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Opening Doors to Economic Opportunity for Our Veterans and Their Families Through Entrepreneurship.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND FINANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on National Security and International Trade and Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 25, 2015, at 1:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Economic Crisis: The Global Impact of a Greek Default.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the following interns in my office be granted the privilege of the floor for the remainder of the day: Jenna Dreydoppel, Tasha Boyer, Denae Benson, Claire Landis, Holly O'Brien, Kelsey Colligan, Jasper MacNaughton, Justin Dahlgren, Grant Ackerman, Anthony Lekanof, Anna Dietderich, and Tavish Logan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Valerie Williams, a fellow in Senator PATTY MURRAY's office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BOYS TOWN CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 893, which was received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 893) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read a third time and passed, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any statements relating to the bill be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bill (H.R. 893) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF CERTAIN PROPERTY TO THE YUKON KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 78, S. 230.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 230) to provide for the conveyance of certain property to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Murkowski amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 2077) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. CONVEYANCE OF PROPERTY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—As soon as practicable, but not later than 180 days, after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services (referred to in this Act as the ''Secretary'') shall convey to the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation located in Bethel, Alaska (referred to in this Act as the ''Corporation''), all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to the property described in section 2 for use in connection with health and social services programs.

(b) EFFECT ON ANY QUITCLAIM DEED.—The conveyance by the Secretary of title by warranty deed under this section shall, on the effective date of the conveyance, supersede and render of no future effect any quitclaim deed to the property described in section 2 executed by the Secretary and the Corporation.

(c) CONDITIONS.—The conveyance of the property under this Act—

(1) shall be made by warranty deed; and

(2) shall not—

(A) require any consideration from the Corporation for the property;

(B) impose any obligation, term, or condition on the Corporation; or

(C) allow for any reversionary interest of the United States in the property.

SEC. 2. PROPERTY DESCRIBED.

The property, including all land and appurtenances, described in this section is the property included in U.S. Survey No. 4000, Lot 2, T. 8 N., R. 71 W., Seward Meridian, containing 22.98 acres.

SEC. 3. ENVIRONMENTAL LIABILITY.

(a) LIABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Corporation shall not be liable for any soil, surface water, groundwater, or other contamination resulting from the disposal, release, or presence of any environmental contamination on any portion of the property described in section 2 on or before the date on which the property is conveyed to the Corporation.

(2) ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION.—An environmental contamination described in paragraph (1) includes any oil or petroleum products, hazardous substances, hazardous

materials, hazardous waste, pollutants, toxic substances, solid waste, or any other environmental contamination or hazard as defined in any Federal or State of Alaska law.

(b) EASEMENT.—The Secretary shall be accorded any easement or access to the property conveyed under this Act as may be reasonably necessary to satisfy any retained obligation or liability of the Secretary.

(c) NOTICE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE ACTIVITY AND WARRANTY.—In carrying out this Act, the Secretary shall comply with subparagraphs (A) and (B) of section 120(h)(3) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 9620(h)(3)).

The bill (S. 230), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

NATIONAL POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS MONTH AND NATIONAL POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER AWARENESS DAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 215, submitted earlier today.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 215) designating the month of June 2015 as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Month'' and June 27, 2015, as ''National Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Awareness Day.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 215) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1698

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk, and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1698) to exclude payments from State eugenics compensation programs from consideration in determining eligibility for, or the amount of, Federal public benefits.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I now ask for a second reading and, in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that for the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the junior Senator from Arkansas be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses or by order of the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2015, THROUGH TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until the following dates and times to convene for pro forma session only, with no business being conducted; further, that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session, unless the House adopts the provisions of S. Con. Res. 19: Friday, June 26, at 10 a.m.; Tuesday, June 30, at 2 p.m.; Friday, July 3, at 10 a.m.; further, that the Senate adjourn on July 3, until 2:30 p.m., Tuesday, July 7; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. 1177, as under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT UNTIL FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2015, AT 10 A.M.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 2:51 p.m., conditionally adjourned until Friday, June 26, 2015, at 10 a.m.